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SOVEREIGNTY AND DIGNITY AT UNO

NOTHING can stop big Powers bullying and coercing their small neighbours if they wish to do so, and Persia, land of extreme poverty, gross corruption and strategically placed oilfields, is a natural centre of political intrigue and intervention. Historically Britain and Russia have much the same record in Persia. To-day the U.S.S.R. is in a stronger position and plays the tougher game. Following the time-dishonoured formula, Mr. Vyshinsky argued before the Security Council that for the Soviet Union to limit its sovereign rights to bargain as it liked with Iran would "not be in conformity with the dignity of any of the member nations of the Council." If that were so, UNO would be meaningless. In the end, the Russians did not stand pat by this formula. Direct negotiations are to proceed between Russia and Persia, but the Council retains the right to call for information on their progress and results.

Provided that Mr. Bevin and Mr. Vyshinsky want a settlement, their blunt speech and vigorous argument are all to the good. Presumably on the Greek dispute Mr. Bevin will not repeat the Soviet fault of trying to prevent discussion of the real issues. Mr. Bevin probably dislikes some parts of the British record in Greece; he should willingly admit mistakes and publicly explain his present policy. On the subject of Indonesia, Mr. Van Mook's statement that the old colonial attitude of the Dutch is now ended, and that they are unanimous in wishing to give an independent status to Indonesia, sounds like an effort to save the face of the Dutch Bourbons who have opposed him throughout and who are now presumably, largely through British pressure, prepared to accept the Sjahrir Government. Britain has everything to gain by full discussion of both these "situations."

For the rest, UNO has agreed on Mr. Trygve Lie, Foreign Minister of Norway, as its Secretary-General. Mr. Trygve Lie is a popular person who comes from a country which everyone respects and no one fears. He owes his appointment perhaps less to his excellent qualities than to the fact that he does not divide the East from the West. Russia, America and Britain can all agree about him. The proposal to invite the World Federation of Trade Unions to be special guests of the Assembly was defeated by an American counter-proposal that the A.F. of L. should occupy the same position. As a result, Britain and America voted for the inclusion of both and the Russians for their exclusion. Strangely enough, when it came to the obviously sensible proposal that the W.F.T.U. should be a consultative member of the Economic Council, Britain and America were among the out-voted delegations. The W.F.T.U. has a unique position in being the one body which represents the working-class of America, Russia and other Powers, and it is right that its voice should be heard on the Economic Council.

In a long and able speech in the House of Commons, Mr. Zilliacus proposed a change in the Constitution of UNO. His proposals were similar to those often made in this journal. He wishes the Assembly to represent political parties and not national States, and looks forward to the time when it will become a genuine Parliament of the World. He spoke with the detailed knowledge of an official who served the League of Nations from its outset, and his proposals are worth the most serious study. At the moment, it must be admitted, they are academic. None of the big Powers is prepared for the limitation on sovereignty involved, and Russia is the least willing to see any modifications of the Charter.

The Argentine Dictatorship

With the UNO stage occupied by the Anglo-Soviet duologue, little attention has been paid to other sources of international friction. Among these, the case of Argentina is outstanding. Although few reports on the situation there appear in the British Press, newspapers in the United States—notably the *New York Times* and the *Herald-Tribune*—have been publishing long articles from their correspondents in Buenos Aires which reveal the lengths to which the military-fascist regime has now gone. Some façade of democracy remains to impress foreign opinion, but the campaign of terror against the opponents of the dictatorship has continued throughout the period of preparation for the "free" elections scheduled for the end of February. Colonel Peron, who has nominally resigned his official positions to run as a Presidential candidate, retains the strings of power and uses the swollen police force to arrest democratic leaders and journalists, to drive workers on to the streets to provide high attendances at his election demonstrations, and to break up opposition meetings with great brutality. This internal repression is paralleled by the warlike preparations of the regime: Paraguay and Bolivia are already under the influence of Argentina, which operates through the army officers. In Chile, there are fears of a military putsch of Argentine inspiration. In the last year, Argentine military expenditure has been four times that of 1941, and the published figures alone absorb half of the present budget. The construction of military roads in frontier provinces and the rapid expansion of the army are but part of a programme which aims at the militarisation of Argentine and the inculcation of Fascist ideologies, especially among the youth. Like Hitler, Peron has openly proclaimed his aims and his glorification of war; like Hitler too, he relies on the divisions among his opponents. His record reveals that on several occasions he has outsmarted both London and Washington, and he feels able to repeat those feats of deception. Latin-American opinion is uneasy at the prospect of a Fascist bloc in the south of the continent, but the small States are unwilling to act against Argentina without strong assurances of outside support. Many people in the United States are now realising the error made in smuggling Argentina into UNO at San Francisco. While Argentine delegates sit in Central Hall, American spokesmen like Henry Morgenthau, Walter Lippman and members of the State Department, openly expose the Fascist administration these delegates represent. As a memorandum circulated to UNO delegates by the New York *Nation* remarks, Argentina's rulers are to-day committing crimes for which the Nazi leaders are in the dock at Nuremberg—conspiracy against peace, and crimes against humanity.

The Greek Case

The Greek Right regard the Soviet-British clash in UNO as their one opportunity of getting back to power. It tends to divide Greece more sharply into Left and Right and increases the difficulties of the Centre on whom the British have mainly relied for their plans to re-establish democracy in Greece. The embarrassment of the Greek Centre is at once shown by the case of Mr. Sophianopoulis who has now, at his own request, returned to Greece, where he has been violently attacked as pro-Soviet and anti-British. There is no basis for any such attack. The official Greek statements on the dispute are sycophantic; they pretend there has been no British intervention, military or political, in Greece, and they are significantly silent about the forthcoming elections. Such a dubiously pro-British line can only embarrass the British. Mr. Sophianopoulis, as Foreign Minister, produced a sensible and balanced comment on the Russian appeal. He avoided all questions of Churchillian policy in 1944, but said that British forces were in Greece at the express desire of successive Greek Governments, were collaborating with the present Government in gradually restoring order and were only in Greece until the people's will had been freely expressed. He said that Anglo-Soviet agreement was essential for Greece. Mr. Bevin is scarcely likely to see in this anything but a sensible and independent expression of view. Indeed Mr. Sophianopoulis is the best card in the British pack. The servile attitude of the Greek Government, clearly designed to drive out the Centre and exacerbate the Left, may give Mr. Vyshinsky a wonderful opportunity of arguing that Greek governments are as much the puppets of Britain as any Persian government is likely to be of Russia; and if Mr. Sophianopoulis is forced to resign, because he shows a measure of independence, this thesis will indeed be strengthened. The truth is that Mr. Bevin is really attempting to establish conditions of freedom and order in Greece, and there is no reply to the argument of the Greek Centre that the best hope of democracy in Greece is a coalition of the Centre and the Left. Unfortunately Mr. Bevin's plans for an amnesty without which free elections are impossible, have been administratively obstructed; and he is likely to find that he can make no progress, and that the Russian case will continue to have force, as long as Britain is represented in Greece by its present agents.

The New French Government

M. Gouin's task in assembling a Cabinet was eased by what appears to have been a strategic retreat on the part of the Communists. They made no objection to the retention by M. Bidault (M.R.P.) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where they had been credited with the intention of staking out a claim; and they endorsed M. Gouin's proposal that the Ministry of Finance (offered first to M. Mendès-France, but declined by him) should go to a Socialist. A Communist, M. Billoux, becomes Minister of Reconstruction, and the politically important portfolio of Veterans' Affairs also goes to a member of that Party. As Minister of Finance, M. André Philip has taken on a big job. He becomes also Minister of National Economy and has the powers of a co-ordinator over the Ministries of Agriculture, Food, Reconstruction, and Industrial Production. To him will fall the task of carrying through the programme of drastic economies which M. Gouin has decided is necessary to curb inflationary tendencies in France. This programme is not likely to be popular, and the Communists are doubtless not displeased that responsibility for it should fall mainly on Socialist shoulders. Moreover, the Popular Republicans are probably much less dangerous to the Left as participants in the Cabinet than they would be if they were in Opposition. With the General Election now less than four months away, it remains to be seen how far the three Parties will be ready to forgo tactical advantages in order to combine in putting quickly through a programme of immediately necessary economic reforms.

Malayan Constitution

The White Paper on *Malayan Union and Singapore* is a document drafted in the Colonial Office, presumably based on the agreements made by Sir Harold MacMichael with each of the Malay rulers. It would seem doubtful whether sufficient attention has been given to the changes in Malaya during the period of Japanese occupation or to the complexities of Chinese-Malayan relations. Though developments in Malaya are not parallel with those in Indonesia and Indo-China, we must expect in Malaya a demand for a greater measure of self-government than is implied in the White Paper. But until the Malayan civil administration returns to the country—so far only military government has operated and civil administration will begin in a few months' time—we are unlikely to have a comprehensive picture of the situation, especially in the North. The Malayans fear the economic superiority of the large Chinese population in the peninsula, especially in Singapore; and in creating by Order in Council a Malayan Union Citizenship the White Paper is plainly intended to create conditions in which Chinese residents in Malaya will have to become Malayan citizens. Among the younger Malayans, who are deeply impressed by the success of the Sjahrir Government, there is already a good deal of discussion about closer relations with Indonesia. The Malayans are Moslems, and so are a large majority of the Indonesians. They have a common language and culture, and between Malaya and Sumatra economic relations have been close for many years. Although the White Paper may have to be modified by future developments, the scheme of unification ends the administrative anomaly between the Straits Settlements and the Malay States. The selection of Mr. Malcolm MacDonald as Governor-General is good news: he should do well. No details are given of the composition of the Councils or the basis of franchise contemplated. But the Rulers or local Sultans, who have ceded "full jurisdiction to His Majesty in his State," will scarcely feel that their power has been seriously undermined by Cmd. 6724.

R.A.F. "Strikes"

Most of the so-called "strikes" by R.A.F. personnel in India have ended and the Prime Minister assured Parliament on Tuesday that the men concerned had returned to duty unconditionally. There can be little doubt that the sense of grievance which led to these acts of indiscipline arose in part from failure to understand clearly the present complicated system of R.A.F. releases, with demobilisation deferred for many specialists and perplexing variations between different branches of the service. The remedy for this is clearly that the Air Ministry should publicise its demobilisation arrangements more effectively within the Air Force. But is this the whole story? The petition said to have been addressed to Mr. Attlee by two thousand airmen at Mauripur contains phrases which suggest that the airmen are challenging, or at least questioning, Government policy. The Prime Minister stressed the need of armed forces sufficient to "carry out our commitments." This, in itself, does not answer the Mauripur airmen, who want to know whether they are being kept in uniform because the Government wishes to talk tough with other Powers. The moral is that our foreign policy—that is, the extent of our "commitments" abroad—requires urgent reconsideration by the Government in the light, not of these protests by disgruntled airmen, but of our whole economic position. It is satisfactory to learn that the Cabinet has ordered a man-power budget to be drawn up, covering the needs not only of the Services but of the industries catering for the home market and exports.

Repealing the Trade Unions Act

The Government's Trade Union Bill is a simple repealing measure, designed to put the legal position back precisely to what it was before 1927. It will therefore be again a matter of opinion, when it becomes law, whether a General Strike is a lawful or an unlawful act; and we may expect opposite opinions from different judges if the question ever comes up for legal decision (as it did not in 1926). Much capital will be made of this prospective uncertainty; but there is not much in it. Apart from the improbability of another General Strike, the fact is that, if such a situation were to arise, it would make little difference whether the strike was unlawful or not—as indeed it made little difference in 1926. Much more important among the new Bill's effects will be the replacement of "contracting-in" by "contracting-out" as the basis of Trade Union contributions to the Labour Party, and the renewal of the right of civil servants to belong to Trade Unions not confined to civil servants. A good many Conservatives must now be regretting their obstinacy in resisting any amendment of the 1927 Act under the Coalition. If they had been more reasonable, most likely the Labour Government would not have given any high priority to Trade Union legislation. As it is, complete repeal was obviously the solution.

The Control of Investment

The Investment Control Bill turns out to be a very mild measure. In the main it continues or gives statutory recognition to machinery that already exists. The powers of control over the investment market under the Defence Regulations have already been prolonged to cover the next five years; the Bill makes them permanent. The principal instrument of control, the Capital Issues Committee under the Treasury, is to remain, broadly with its existing powers, but is to be reinforced by some new members. In addition, there is to be a National Investment Council, but it is to be purely advisory, with no executive power. The Treasury keeps executive authority in its own hands: it, and not the Council, will exercise the new power under the Bill to guarantee interest and principal on reconstruction and development loans, to a maximum of £50 million a year. This is an important new power, but obviously it would not go very far by itself towards meeting the fall in investment that might occur in a really serious business slump. It could not, for example, suffice to finance major schemes of development in the basic industries in such a situation. Nor, evidently, is it meant to do so, or the whole Act meant to introduce anything in the nature of a general system of planned investment. There is nothing in the Bill at all resembling the familiar Socialist scheme for a National Investment Board that would be the main provider of new capital for economic development. This is not unnatural; such a Board could hardly work without a far larger nationalised sector of industry than exists to-day.

Settlement of a Libel Action

On page 86 we give the terms of a settlement reached in the High Court on January 23rd of a libel action taken against the editor, publisher and printers of this journal by Lt. Col. G. R. Gayre. In the London Diary on August 5th, 1944, "Critic", taking objection to Lt. Col. Gayre's published views on ethnological matters, opposed his possible appointment as Chief Education Officer in Germany. Lt. Col. Gayre took exception to the words used and alleged innuendo of a very serious character. The NEW STATESMAN AND NATION gladly states that it did not and does not intend any such imputations, but maintains its right to express the opinion that Lt. Col. Gayre was an unsuitable person to be appointed as Chief Education Officer in Germany.

PARLIAMENT: Tory Dilemma

Wednesday

REPLYING for the Opposition in the Coal Debate, Eden, Deputy-Leader of the Tories, seemed to be making a strong bid for Churchill's mantle. Behind and beside him the Young Pretenders listened attentively to a speech which was, at once, energetic and without punch. They were moderately pleased with it. The Tory succession remains open.

The general argument which Eden initiated was that the Minister was offering the House a Bill but no coal, that anyhow the Bill wasn't nationalisation, that nationalisation was bad in any case, that the Minister could "pass the buck" at will on to the Coal Board, and that Parliament was, therefore, losing its power to make the Minister account for the industry. Unable to claim that they were speaking for the miners, the Opposition through J. S. C. Reid (Glasgow, Hillhead) claimed that they "did not in any way represent the Mining Association." This, for the first time in twenty-five years of Coal Debates, the Tories could, oddly enough, claim: as Dalton interjected, the mineowners had "sold out" on their usual Parliamentary spokesmen by not objecting to the Government's proposals for compensation. This was denied by Keeling, Conservative member for Twickenham, who read a letter, written on January 21st to the Minister of Fuel and Power on behalf of the owners, describing the transitional provision for shareholders as "utterly inadequate." There are obviously some coalowners who feel that persistence, through their interpreters on the floor of the House, will enable them to suck the utmost compensation from the exhausted industry before yielding it to public care.

When Shinwell was speaking, an unidentified voice from the Tory Back-bench kept asking: "What about coal?" As the whole debate was concerned with coal, the Minister very properly didn't pause to reply. But, with few exceptions (like Colonel Lancaster (Fylde) a colliery director, who advised the Government to learn from America how to get coal), the persistent question of the Opposition was, "What about compensation?" rather than "What about coal?" Charles Grey of Durham, an ex-miner who six months ago was working in a pit, made a freshening maiden speech in which he said, "I've never thought in terms of compensation but of confiscation; and the less the owners get, the better I will like it." That was the authentic voice of the miner, and a compelling psychological reason for nationalisation which Eden, working out his speech from statistical reports, would have some difficulty in understanding. The issue of nationalisation or free enterprise in the coal-mines had little part in Conservative speeches. They were concerned above all with the precedents to be set for compensation, and with the consumers, left naked in their view, despite the Consumers' Council, to the inflictions of Shinwell. Deserted by the Mining Association, unsupported by "the consumers" who have experienced the advantages of private enterprise but not of nationalisation, the Tory spokesmen were well drubbed not only by Shinwell and Dalton, but by the arguments, at last triumphant, of generations of miners.

The Coal Bill has placed the Tories in their now familiar dilemma. They would like nationalisation to be a failure: but if nationalisation is too much of a failure, it will harm Britain: it will harm them. And besides, when they are older, they too might be called to govern. They had the same difficulty about the "strikes" in the R.A.F. Delighted as they were by the embarrassments which the Government was experiencing and which they themselves had contributed to by stimulating dissatisfaction with the release scheme, they could feel no pleasure at the thought of indiscipline in the Services or the prospect of a lack of troops for military commitments.

After cheering McGovern, who charged the Prime Minister with slowness in demobilisation, they cheered the Prime Minister when he said those "who encourage dissatisfaction about demobilisation in the very difficult circumstances of the day (are) doing very ill service."

The Opposition, in full bray, is never logical.

PHINEAS MINOR

SOCIAL SECURITY

THE Social Insurance Bill is a substantial improvement on the late Government's White Paper. A long step is being taken towards the establishment of that condition of Social Security which Sir William Beveridge proclaimed as his objective. The Bill, indeed, covers only a part of the field: it needs to be read in conjunction with the measures dealing with industrial injuries and children's allowances, and with the still awaited National Health Plan over which Mr. Bevan has been negotiating with the local authorities and the doctors. All these measures, taken together, do go a long way towards "freedom from want." In particular, it is a considerable advance beyond the White Paper that definite provision is to be made for regular quinquennial reconsideration of rates of benefit, so that they can be adjusted to changes in the cost of living as well as to changing estimates of the standards of living. The proposed rates for retirement pensions are also a considerable improvement on those contemplated in the White Paper; and it is a great advance that sickness benefit is to be unlimited in duration and is not, as the White Paper monstrously suggested, to be cut down when the illness is prolonged. Moreover, the allowance for the first child is raised, commendably, from 5*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.*

The improvements will, of course, cost money, and the burden both on the insured person and on the Exchequer will be heavier than was contemplated either in the Beveridge Report or in the White Paper. The proposal to reduce immediate costs by deferring the full operation of the new pension rates was abandoned by the late Government in the White Paper, and is not revived now. Instead, the pension rates are brought nearer to the deferred rates laid down in the Beveridge Report. All in all, the new Bill involves spending a great deal of money; and the prospective contributors, who will have to provide a large part of the cost by regular deductions from their earnings, will, no doubt, be disposed to regard it with mixed feelings, especially where they are already paying substantial sums in various kinds of voluntary insurance. The Bill will not be greeted with public enthusiasm similar to that with which the original Beveridge Report was received. When that Report appeared, people looked chiefly at what they were to get under its proposals; now, having counted their chickens in advance, they will be disposed to look more closely at what they will have to pay. In time it will be realised that, even if the costs seem high, the advantages for most people are fully proportionate.

There are, nevertheless, points on which the Bill is open to criticism. It seems a pity that the Government has not seen its way to make unemployment benefit, as well as sickness benefit, unlimited in duration. True, the limits are much less rigid than they were in the White Paper; and there is, for the present, no reinstatement of the Means Test such as the White Paper's proposals involved. Instead, there is a return to the old distinction between "covenanted" and "uncovenanted" benefits—the latter to be available at the standard rates for a period of five years only, at the Minister's discretion, to those who have exhausted their benefit rights under the insurance plan. This limit of time appears to mean that after the five years the Means Test will again be applied to the long-term unemployed. But there is no need to stress this point unduly: a great deal can happen in five years; and, on the analogy of the past, the conditions of benefit will probably have undergone more than one revision before the temporary period draws to an end. Still, it is not easy to see why the Government could not have gone the whole hog, and made the right to benefit unlimited. The cost, in view of the prospective man-power situation, could hardly be high; and the advantage in terms of the popularity of the measure would be great.

There are also, if we understand the Bill and the memorandum which goes with it aright, some very curious features about the position of widows after the temporary widow's allowance has come to a stop. A widow aged 50 or more at the time of her husband's death (and at least ten years married) thereafter gets a permanent pension of 26*s.* a week. A widow left with one or more dependent children of school age gets the same amount when her children cease to be of school age, provided she is then aged 40 or more. But a widow between 40 and 50 whose children were already over school age when her husband died will apparently get no permanent pension at all. If this interpretation is right, a couple of days' difference in the child's age or in the date of the husband's death may make the difference to the widow between 26*s.* a week and nothing at all—nothing, that is, beyond the temporary widow's allowance lasting for 13 weeks only. If this is what the Bill means, something drastic must clearly be done in Parliament to put the absurdity right.

The remaining large issue is that of the actual rates of benefit proposed for the first quinquennium of the scheme. These benefits, as we have said, are better than those laid down in the White Paper; but they are not on the whole up to the Beveridge benefits if it is assumed, as Sir William Beveridge laid down, that his figures should be adjusted to meet changes in the cost of living beyond those of which his estimates took account. The Government, like its predecessor, has preferred definite figures of benefits and contributions to any sort of sliding scale based on the cost of living; and this is probably right. But inevitably it leaves a doubt concerning the adequacy of the rates proposed; for no one yet knows what the cost of living over the next five years is likely to be. If the Government, for example, were to remove or substantially reduce the existing food subsidies, the effect would be at once to render obsolete the rates of benefit proposed in the Bill. There is a similar difficulty in the way of saying whether the proposed rates of contribution are fair; for the answer really depends on the Government's intentions about the future taxation of wages. Contributions on the scale proposed in the Bill and deductions on the present scale under P.A.Y.E. can hardly be regarded as compatible; and, to say the least, the attempt to apply them together in times of peace would probably lead to very widespread discontent.

One further issue of a highly controversial kind arises over the Bill. The Friendly Societies are protesting loudly against their exclusion from any place in its administration, and are maintaining that the Labour Party before the election promised them that they would be given a recognised position. On the merits of their claim there is a sharp conflict of views. The Civil Service administrators naturally dislike the idea of any dual or divided administration of the State scheme. On the other hand, if the State scheme is completely unified, as the Bill proposes, there will have to be an entirely separate administration for those who are insured voluntarily with the Friendly Societies for supplementary benefits. Either solution seems most unsatisfactory; but there is no third way open, unless the Government is prepared to return to the rejected proposal that the State should take over voluntary insurance as well as compulsory insurance—in which case both types could easily be brought under unified administration, and the whole issue would disappear. We think that, the advantages and disadvantages being not unevenly balanced, it would have been wiser on the Government's part to make some concession to the Friendly Societies—the more so because the Labour Party's earlier pronouncements had aroused their expectation that this would be done.

Though we have criticised certain features

of the Bill as it stands, we fully recognise its outstanding importance as an element in the Government's social programme. What is needed to make it work well is a general economic and social policy that will narrow its operation. The better the health scheme is, the less sickness there will be; the better the Government's employment policy is, the fewer unemployed will have to be provided for. The prevention of want by means of social insurance benefits is a most valuable social service; but it is infinitely better, to the utmost possible extent, to do away with illness and unemployment than to relieve the want to which they give rise. The Bill therefore cannot be assessed in isolation: it stands as part of a much wider social security programme, of which the successive instalments are being produced at a rate with which no reasonable person can find fault.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

THE Bill for the National Health Service, which is a necessary part of the structure of Social Security, has got its place in the queue of major measures and will probably be before the House by Easter, with a reasonable chance of being on the Statute Book this year. Its pilot, Mr. Bevan, will have the difficult job of steering it between the Scylla of Party doctrine, which wants a full-time salaried service, and the Charybdis of private practice and the voluntary system in which the Willink Scheme foundered without trace.

The Minister has taken his soundings skilfully. He has confidentially discussed his scheme (which will not be public property until Parliament has a chance to see it) with the T.U.C., with the B.M.A., with the Socialist Medical Association, with the Local Authorities, with the Voluntary Hospitals, and with all the interested parties, including the pharmacists and the dentists. He is not "negotiating"; he is just telling them. But he will take note of their comments.

Some say the Bill itself is a compromise, that he should have gone the whole hog; that, since it embraces the entire population, there should have been no sanction of private, fee-receiving practice; that, administratively, it is too complex and concedes too much to the sensibilities of the profession; that it is unfair to the local authorities; and that Mr. Bevan is pickling a rod for himself in the case of the teaching hospitals. On the other hand, the medical nonconformists see in it the regimentation of the profession, the destruction of doctor-patient relationships, the death of initiative, and injustice to the voluntary hospitals. Yet none of them is prepared to damn the scheme out of hand. The Calvinists of the Party doctrine will hesitate to obstruct on its way to the Statute Book a Service which embodies the greater part of what they want, even if it is not the pure gospel. The politico-medicoes of the B.M.A. and the Royal Colleges, having gambled on Willink and lost, find so much that is reasonable and rational in the proposals that they will not want to "raise the ante" and risk losing again. And can voluntary hospitals defend flagdays as a supercharge on the public which will be paying for an efficient hospital service under the Social Insurance Act?

That leaves, as serious potential opposition, the local authorities; and since those which really matter have Labour majorities, that cannot be underestimated. It has been quite plain from the start that Bevan meant to have hospital regions, based on the teaching hospitals, as providing the "pool" of consultants and the source of clinical experiment and advances; that the grouping of hospitals and hospital services would not necessarily conform to local authority boundaries; and that he meant to bring the country's hospital service under the direct authority of the Ministry of Health with delegation to Regional Hospital Boards. But, since 1929, many of the local authorities, and conspicuously the L.C.C., have built up municipal hospital services of which they are justifiably proud. A straw in the wind, which might become a gale, is the fact that the London Labour Party is going before the electors in the County Council elections in March with the boast (which it can sustain) that since 1934 it has created the finest municipal hospital service in the world. Now these hospitals are to be taken over and integrated with the voluntary hospitals under a Regional Board, on which the L.C.C. will be represented in common with the other local governments embraced, and with representatives of the voluntary hospitals and the medical profession.

The real test of the Bill, however, is: Does it take care of the patient? Parliament will apply that test to the Bill when its details are disclosed, but it can be assumed that in design and scope it will provide a completely comprehensive service—from before birth, in the form of ante-natal care, until death. The people of this country will get clinics, a family-doctor service, consultants, hospital treatment, rehabilitation, dentists, drugs, oculists and opticians, and a lot more. All free; but there is nothing to compel you to confine yourself to the doctor whom you can get for nothing. You can go and pay a fee to another if you want to.

It is public knowledge that Mr. Bevan is backing health-centres in a big way. The provision of these will be the function of the local authorities. Groups of doctors will be able to use these communal surgeries and diagnostic clinics. But the doctor who wants to walk by himself can still have a National Health Service practice conducted from his own surgery.

As far as can be judged from the mutterings of his critics, both ill- and well-disposed, the Minister has foxed them all with his system of payment of the doctors. It seems that everyone who comes into the scheme will get a guaranteed income—a salary if you like—but, as an incentive, the doctor will also get a *per capita* fee for the insured patients on his books, and he will be allowed to have private patients. How that will work will depend on the balance between "salary" and fee. If the "salary" is adequate and the fee is small enough—just a bonus for enthusiasm—then the dangers of the competitively swollen practices we have seen under the panel system may be avoided. Private patients seem a redundant concession in a scheme for an all-in service and it is a bit unfair on the full-time medical officers, who will not be allowed to practice. How the payment of consultants is to be worked is not known, but it is to be hoped that it will not be on the *ad hoc* fee basis, which has failed in New Zealand.

Mr. Bevan has trailed his coat very effectively on the sale of practices. He has told the profession publicly that he does not see that there is any reason for compensation. But in the next breath Mr. Bevan has magnanimously conceded "fair compensation." And rightly, because while the traffic in practices is deplorable, the doctors themselves are the victims of it. The older ones count on the sale for the capital of their old age, and the younger ones are in the throes of mortgage. The right way to treat practice-values is as superannuation or as life-insurance to be collected by the dependants. And that is how it will be done. Doctors *en bloc* will not be bought out; they just will not be allowed to sell. The local health executive will decide whether the practice concerned is redundant, or adjudge the successor. In either case, the outgoing doctor will receive a fair price, if he is retiring; or, if he is moving elsewhere, he will be credited with its assessed value against the day of his retirement or death. There will be a superannuation scheme for the rest.

No doctor will be prevented from putting up his plate anywhere, but the local health executive will decide whether the area is "over-doctored"; if so, he will not be allowed into the National Health Service and will have to rely on private patients. On the other hand inducements will be offered to attract doctors to under-doctored areas (which are usually under-doctored because they are unattractive or poverty-stricken).

It would appear that the teaching hospitals (of which there are eleven in England and Wales) are to be virtually free of the scheme. They will be formally taken over, but they will be handed back to the Governors (although the Ministry will surely insist on representation). They will provide beds under the scheme, but for the rest they will be as at present, with their teaching-consultants functioning as professors and lecturers and clinicians and at the same time earning as fat fees as they can in the tradition of Harley Street. The anomaly arises from the fact that these are, in part, medical schools under the Universities, and the Universities are outside Ministerial jurisdiction. But the matter may be taken care of by the University Courts, in which there is a great deal of strong feeling about part-time, plural-function, professors in the medical faculties.

Final judgment on the plan must await publication of the Bill, whose financial provisions will be most important. But the preliminary verdict, even in quarters predisposed to hostility, seems to be "We don't like this or that, but it will work."

LINES DESIGNED TO GIVE OFFENCE TO NONE

People in houses of glass
  Must be careful to keep down the blind
Lest snoopers peep in as they pass,
  But those who don't live in glass houses don't mind.

People who find a mare's nest
  And set up a rash hue and cry
May learn that it would have been best,
  All things considered, to let sleeping dogs lie.

Snakes in the grass cannot creep
  Without risking a righteous rebuff,
Wolves in the clothing of sheep
  Are ill-advised to go about crying "Wolf!" in a huff.

People who *will* smell a rat,
  And start off a red herring chase
May only invite tit-for-tat
  And find they have merely cut off their nose to spite their face.

Accusers themselves may be tried
  And go off with a flea in the ear,
While people with nothing to hide
  Have, as Mr. Bevin has repeatedly observed, nothing whatever to fear.

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

WITH no more than a formal apology for ill-chosen words, General Morgan resumes his position as chief of UNRRA operations in Germany. It is a triumphal return; the support that gathered round him was a remarkable testimony to his work and personality. All the information that has come out since his dismissal has confirmed his story and explained his reasons for telling it. The anti-Semitism of Poland, Hungary and eastern Europe in general has not died with the war, and Jews have been voluntarily crossing in a steady stream into the British and American zones. As they are not technically Displaced Persons, and their arrival in large numbers may seriously disrupt relief organisations, the British have opposed their entry. The Zionists have succeeded, however, in organising, with the help of American money, an underground route which runs all the way from the Baltic to Bari and from there to Palestine, where their entry is now sanctioned under the agreement to accept 1,500 immigrants each month. The energy, resource and initiative shown by this organisation command the respect of everybody acquainted with it. Its Scarlet Pimpernels seem mainly to be Rabbis in the American forces, but

they have the support of many Christian priests. The moral is not that the Jews or General Morgan or the authorities on the spot are to blame, but that the settlement of the Palestinian and Jewish problem cannot wait.

* * *

The film lights beat down on the matinee face of Mr. Stettinius, the rugged features of Mr. Bevin, the uninformative smile of Mr. Vyshinsky, the superior eyebrows of Mr. Jebb, the sharp profile of Mr. Wellington Koo, and the legal lips of the Chairman. Indeed, all the delegates of the Security Council perspired uncomfortably as the show began. Item 1. Should the film continue throughout the Session? They decided only to allow it a quarter of an hour. Item 2. Should the name of Albania be on the Agenda? The discussion lasted for an hour, but it was soon perfectly clear that, whether Mr. Stettinius got through his motion for postponement or Mr. Koo succeeded in dividing procedure from principle, or Mr. Vyshinsky forced someone to say that they would consider Albania, the result would be exactly the same. Albania would not be considered immediately, but would come up in turn. Did Mr. Vyshinsky gain anything by his comically acute legalism? The Russians had the last word, and the American motion was not carried. A gain of prestige? I am not sure what prestige means, if it is bought at the expense of general boredom. At the end of the hour, the chairman, who, I thought, acquitted himself admirably, pointed out that his instructions had not been obeyed and that the film lights were still on. After several requests we returned to normal lighting. I sympathised with the publicity people. No doubt they hoped to regale the public with a row between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Vyshinsky. But these things cannot be timed, and the first hour of the Security Council film deals wholly with a matter of procedure.

* * *

Mr. Attlee's reply will not satisfy Mr. Gollancz, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other important ecclesiastical and lay personages who signed a memorial on the subject of famine in Europe. Their concern for Europe is sincere, and I wish it were even more widely shared and that people who are prepared to give up some of their rations to hungry people on the Continent had the chance of doing so. As it is, they can only contribute money to COBSRA, as the joint organisation of Relief Societies (75 Victoria St., S.W.1) is called. But I do not see how the Prime Minister could make a categorical promise that British rations will in no way be raised as long as famine remains in Europe. Mr. Attlee could do a lot of good, I think, by following up his letter with a detailed statement on the food and health of the Continent. For the most part (excluding Greece, Italy and some parts of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe) the picture would show that the rural areas are not too bad, that the small towns are bad, and many of the big towns desperate. Budapest has actually reached the appalling figure of 40 per cent. infant mortality. Rumania is reported to be suffering from a typhus epidemic and to be urgently in need of drugs; France would not be hungry if it were not badly administered and politically divided; Holland and Norway are better than we expected; Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland are almost "pre-war"; Belgium has made the best recovery among the occupied countries. In Germany, the greatest problem of all, conditions vary widely, but they are less catastrophic than was expected. So far there has been no widespread disease. But I am told on the best authority that in the British Zone the food situation is now very gloomy. The present 1,550 calories may have to be severely reduced within the next few months.

* * *

Mr. Harry Hopkins was one of the handful of great men who emerged during the war. To him goes much of the credit for Lend-Lease and the good relations that were somehow maintained between Moscow and Washington. Always ill and in pain, Harry Hopkins lived in the White House, Mr. Roosevelt's closest adviser and boon companion. He was a constant source of good stories. How significant is the contrast between Mr. Wilson, with the correct and naïve Col. House as his confidant, and Mr. Roosevelt working with Hopkins and breaking off to laugh at his stream of improper stories!

* * *

The Egyptian Government has been quick to draw conclusions from recent events in Persia. Since the middle of December, a considerable number of democrats and Socialists have been arrested and held without trial. Among them was Rushdy Saleh, who edits the legal Arabic paper, *Al Fagr Gedid*, which has been demanding land reform. Although no charges have been made against the people arrested, the police say that they found copies of Marxist books published by Lawrence and Wishart (which have been sold openly in Egypt for years) and papers which prove that these people were conducting Socialist study groups. It seems that these raids have been planned for some time; just before Christmas, a "Supreme Committee for Security" was created to eliminate "subversive activity of all kinds" and began its work with grants from both the Egyptian Government and British Intelligence. An informant back from Egypt, who described these events to me, regretted that the police force is commanded by British officers and said that there is a close liaison between the Ministry of the Interior and the British Embassy. This campaign against Egyptian progressives is proceeding while extreme reactionary groups like the Moslem Brotherhood—which now claims half-a-million members—can organise pogroms like those of last November. The Brotherhood has created a special corps of thugs which is being trained to terrorise political opponents. My informant said that the danger of naked dictatorship is growing in Egypt. Nowhere, except perhaps in Persia, is the contrast so conspicuous between the vast riches of the wealthy and the utter destitution of the poor.

* * *

The case of Mr. Philip Sansom is really very odd. In April last he was sentenced (with two other defendants) to nine months' gaol on a charge of conspiring to disaffect members of the Armed Forces. Mr. Justice Birkett, in passing sentence, spoke of the evident sincerity and idealism of the defendants. On the day before his release, Sansom was presented with a notice to attend a medical examination for the Army at 9 a.m. next day, *i.e.*, within an hour of coming out of prison. He did not obey, and is now serving a further six months in gaol for failing to turn up for his medical. I was glad to see that a letter of protest, signed by H. J. Laski, Augustus John, and others, has been published by several newspapers. I can scarcely believe that the authorities really want as a soldier a man who has been convicted for conspiring to "disaffect," or that anyone can defend this cat-and-mouse procedure.

* * *

In his accomplished broadcast on Sunday night Mr. E. M. Forster said that the greatest changes he noticed in revisiting India after twenty-five years were that purdah was breaking down, the women often outnumbering the men at public functions, and that everyone talked politics almost to the exclusion of all other topics. He also noticed that while the rich live better than the rich in this country, the poor are not only poorer than any here, but lamentably and obviously under-nourished and unhealthy. He left us to draw the conclusion—which applies to the whole of Asia and much of Africa. It is that if you cease to assume that your ribs stick out of your skin because of some unalterable decree of fate and believe that your poverty and hunger are man-made, then you become a politician. There are now several hundred million new politicians of this sort.

Here is an example which has just reached me. It was posted in the district of Midnapur and directed to a well-known Labour leader. Some of these poor, it will be noted, are not yet wholly politicians; but they write English (even if imperfectly), and if their history is not up to date, they have at least noticed that there is a Labour Party in England and think the time ripe to appeal to one of its chief officers. I transcribe the letter, which is signed with three names, precisely:

> Sir,—With due respect and humble submission I beg to state that We are poor men. We are cultivater of Western Bengal. We are labourer. Our expenditure is more than our income. We cannot receive back what we cost for our agriculture. Landlords do not give us the satisfactory share of corn which we produce in the field. Farmers take food thrice daily every man takes one seer of boiled rice at time. Thus in three times one man takes three seers of rice. Also he requires Dal, vegetables and cloth. Robbers destroy our crops when we cultivate the land. We do no believe the officers of our country. We do not deny the Royal duties East India Company's Kings and afterwards we shall not deny the taxes. One of ours is old man unable to do the work. Officers get pensions salaries and bonus. We get nothing.
>
> So you will be kind enough to grant us the relief of money and thus save our lives.

Not yet politicians? No, the letter reads like one of those early petitions from British labourers that you can read in social histories of England.

* * *

By general consent, the shirts given to demobilised men are of bad quality, but the rest of the equipment good. In particular, the fitting of the suits is remarkable. The best story I've heard is of a superior person (a journalist, they say) who said he would take no ready-mades. He was courteously told that a suit could be made to his measure if he waited the necessary couple of months. He agreed, and had his measurements taken. Though he did not know it, the suit he would have had at once was put aside for him. When it was sent him in due course, he wrote back saying that it was an admirable fit, and congratulating himself on his wisdom in waiting for it to be specially made for him!

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. V. Richards.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

It had been said that young people should take a closer interest in municipal and political affairs. A good way to do this would be to create around our municipalities social occasions when women could put on pretty clothes and wear lovely jewels.—Speech of Chairman at meeting of National Association of Goldsmiths: *Birmingham Mail.*

The sitting of Parliament under a Labour Government has comparatively little effect on social and club life. Things were very different when the Conservatives had a large majority.—*Liverpool Evening Post.*

Take conscription. Just when a lad's coming along nicely, the Army may take him to some outlandish place where he'll pick up bad cricketing ways, or even get no cricket at all.—Mr. Andrew Sandham, reported in *Evening Standard.*

Do your ears fan out? Try pasting them back with theatrical spirit gum. Press the ear flat, after applying the gum—until dry.—*Vogue.*

Since over 50 per cent. of divorcees remarried, divorce did not necessarily indicate that the institution of marriage was breaking down.—Report in *News Chronicle.*

A SOCIALIST EXPERIMENT

Two features sharply distinguish the Third Czechoslovak Republic from the First. The First Republic was primarily a bourgeois democracy based on many nationalities; the Third is a social democracy and a national State. The Germans are being expelled; the Hungarians are being exchanged; and the Sub-Carpathian Ruthenians have been handed over to the Soviet Union. Nationalisation, in turn, has been necessitated economically by the complete disruption of the Czechoslovak economic structure during the past seven years. Politically, it is inspired by the determination to root out those forces which made the betrayal of 1938 possible.

Munich was a blow not only inflicted upon the Czechs from without but dealt at them equally from within. The whole of their threatened frontier districts were in German hands, but so too were many of their key industries, still to a large extent German-owned or German-controlled. Even this source of weakness, however, might have been overcome had the Czechs been able to count upon the absolute loyalty of their own big industrialists and the key men at the centre of their economic life. But this was not so.

For this reason the nationalisation decree strikes not only at Germans and collaborators—both of whom are dispossessed without compensation—but equally at the indigenous sources of their power—those vast financial, industrial and agricultural combines which were in the hands of a few and, as it turned out, unreliable Czechs. By the nationalisation decrees these are now subordinated finally and completely to the State. Dispossession of the Germans would by itself have provided a strong impetus to, nationalisation. A vacuum of ownership was created in nearly two-thirds of Czechoslovak industry. In some industries, the proportion of German holdings was even higher. Practically the whole of the porcelain industry, 90 per cent. of the paper industry, 75 per cent. of the chemical works, to name but a few, were in German hands.

In addition, however, there was an urgent need to overhaul the whole structure of the Czechoslovak economy. Many industries, such as the heavy industries, synthetic oil and aircraft, were inflated, under the Reich, out of all proportion to Czechoslovakia's peacetime needs. The aircraft industry, for instance, will in future be able to employ only 5 per cent. of the workers employed by the Germans. Many others, like the textile industry, were turned over to quite different forms of production. And, at the same time, German collapse brought with it widespread economic ruin. The transport system was practically paralysed; out of 90,000 waggons, for instance, only 13,000 were left. The coal industry was crippled: in May, 1945, Czech miners were producing only 18 per cent. of the monthly production of 1937.

And yet these economic stresses, which might so heavily have weighted the scales in favour of a planned economy, probably provided only the lesser motive for nationalisation. The major motive was political, and it is significant that one of the leading Czech bourgeois journalists, Ferdinand Peroutka, could dismiss nationalisation as "politically inevitable," adding: "Let us hope that it will pay economically." The humiliation of German occupation and of having been forced to contribute to the war effort of the enemy has undoubtedly put Czech workers in a radical frame of mind, and there is no doubt that nationalisation was the overwhelming demand of the great majority of them.

What then, in these circumstances, is the form and extent which nationalisation has taken in Czechoslovakia? Over 10,000 concerns had been nationalised by mid-December and about a million workers were working in State enterprises. All mines, power plants, heavy industries, and the whole chemical industry have been nationalised, in addition to all the larger factories in such key industries as textiles, china, glass, cellulose, timber, paper and leather. Furthermore, sugar factories, distilleries, breweries, flour mills and chocolate factories will henceforward belong to the State, in so far as they do not belong to co-operatives. Finally, all joint stock companies engaged in banking and financial transactions have been taken over and a new credit of 800,000,000 crowns has been furnished for nationalised industry.

All these State enterprises are to be managed according to the principles of commercial enterprise, and though the State claims a share of their profits, it does not vouch for their liabilities. The class in control is still the managerial class, and owners, while being deprived of ownership (with compensation) are permitted by the State and the employees (both of whom have a voice in the matter) to remain on as managers.

A State enterprise is run by a manager and a managing committee—the Works Administration. The members of the latter are one-third elected by the employees and one-third nominated by the Central Authority for the industry—a body resembling the projected Coal Board in Britain. The overall plan for the country as a whole is drawn up by the Economic Council, which is composed of the six Cabinet Ministers with economic portfolios and representatives of the Trade Union and of the Co-operative Movements. Detailed plans are worked out by the Planning Office, both bodies being atttached to the Prime Minister's Office. The Minister of Industry, however, is responsible for carrying through the plans in the factories. It is he who has to approve the nomination and election of the members of the Works Administrations, and his approval may at any time be withdrawn. The manager himself is nominated or discharged by agreement with the Minister of Industry and the Board of the Central Authority, after hearing the recommendations of the Central Trade Union Council and the industrial organisations concerned.

The chief of these industrial organisations is the Factory and Works Council which represents the interest of the employees in every factory, State or private, which employs more than twenty men. These Factory Councils are entitled to "control the activities of the factory concerned in the interest of the community . . . to take part in the regulation of working conditions and wages, the employment of new workers . . . to take part in planning and controlling production." What would seem to be the inevitable disputes which must arise between Works Administrations and Factory Councils are dealt with by arbitration boards established at the district offices of the Ministry of Labour.

It is too early yet to judge what is likely to be the eventual outcome of this huge-scale experiment in State ownership. The Czechs are aware that they have no model for their scheme and very little experience upon which to draw. They are aware, too, that there is only one test of success—increased production—and the increase has got to be very rapid and very large if Czechoslovakia is to regain anything like her pre-war share of world trade and her pre-war standard of living.

In addition to suffering the ravages of war and of having been heavily involved in the collapse of Germany, the Czechs have deliberately shouldered the additional burden of expelling nearly a million high-grade German workers from their most highly industrialised districts from which came the bulk of their export trade; and Slovakia is to lose the Hungarian workers, too. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia, like so many other countries, is having to deal with serious symptoms of post-war fatigue and demoralisation, above all among what should be the most productive section of the community.

If the Czechs really put their backs into this experiment in social democracy, it can succeed. But they have got to do a somewhat harder day's work for the Republic than they did for the Nazis, or the experiment will fail. And it won't be just the failure of an experiment. As Laušman said in a recent speech: "The future of Czechoslovak industry is the future of the Czechoslovak Republic."

SHIELA GRANT DUFF

THE FUTURE OF THE INDIAN ARMY

INDIAN problems at the present time mean to interested onlookers in this country very little beyond the constitutional issue and economic planning. The future of India is regarded as dependent on the great and seemingly insoluble struggle between Hindus and Mahomedans, and its material prosperity as dependent on a large number of plans outlined by the Central and Provincial Governments and by private enterprise. It is not unnatural in such circumstances that England should scarcely notice other projects that are being discussed in India, even though some of them will materially affect her and are already much nearer to fulfilment than the more spectacular schemes of the politicians and economists. There is, for instance, the problem of the future of the Indian Army to which the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Claude Auchinleck, has recently directed notice in two long statements. There, indeed, is a problem of vital concern both to England and to India, a complex problem in which what is conveniently termed Indianisation is an outstanding factor.

Indianisation of the commissioned ranks in the Army began in 1918, when it was decided to grant King's commissions to Indians and to establish a cadet school at Indore. The process was slow, the school was closed after three years, and Indian cadets were sent to Woolwich and Sandhurst for some years until an Indian Military Academy was opened. In 1929 eight units of cavalry and infantry were chosen to be Indianised, but in 1940, as the Indian Army rapidly expanded, it became necessary to abolish that restricted scheme, and so it came about, after many years of half-hearted experiment and often virulent criticism, that no distinction was made whether an officer was Indian or British, although for what the Commander-in-Chief calls "a matter of necessity and convenience," a balance between the two has been maintained.

Although the first World War brought many unpleasant shocks to England, it cannot be said that it brought general realisation of the fact that a great field of employment was being closed to the middle classes. For generations the Indian Army had lured young men from here, men who often could not afford to enter the British Army and who saw in India the chance of a professional life with a good deal of comparatively cheap sport thrown in, the possibility of active service and, if all went well, the certainty of a fair pension. Thus it came about that in 1939 there were roughly 3,000 British officers in the Indian Army, and at present there are in it about 2,300 British officers with permanent commissions, excluding medical officers, together with several thousand emergency commissioned British officers. Of the permanent officers some have stayed on over the retiring age and a good many more must be due shortly to retire. The date when the last of them will go and when the Indian Army will be completely officered by Indians cannot be predicted: it depends on the supply of Indian officers with the necessary experience and knowledge to be able to fill all grades in the officer cadre, and that supply, according to the C.-in-C., is not yet sufficient. None the less, it must be recognised that the old conundrum of "What to do with our boys?" is being accentuated here. The British officers with permanent commissions will serve their time or presumably be able to retire on proportionate pension, and their number is sure to dwindle rapidly when demobilisation is in full swing. During the transition stage towards complete Indianisation, the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Army will have the help of experts seconded from the British Services, as is already the case in the R.I.A.F., where the personnel of all ranks is Indian, supplemented by officers seconded from the R.A.F.; but the process of secondment will not involve anything like the number of British officers formerly absorbed into the Indian Army. Into what outlet will the young

men who want to lead an active, outdoor life, but who cannot afford to be commissioned in the British Army, and indeed may not be equal to the increased competition for it, turn their energies? There is a question to tax the ingenuity of those masters at Public Schools who give advice on careers, and the answer may be found in emigration to the Dominions.

Some of the complexities that India will have to face in the maintenance of the three fighting Services may briefly be noted. In 1939 there were only three class regiments in contrast to the composite regiments: there are now 14 class regiments. The expansion of the Army and the tapping of fresh sources of recruitment during the war may have made that perpetuation of class and caste inevitable. Thus some prejudices have been enlarged and some dissipated by the war. It is a curious position. The Army, as Sir Claude Auchinleck has said, "recognises no difference of caste or race, and I hope it never will"; and he stresses the point that the Indian officer of to-day must be an Indian first and last, and not a Sikh, a Punjabi, a Mahratta, a Rajput, a Tamil or a Telugu. That may be even more essential in the post-war Army, but the existence of those 14 class regiments is a reminder that recruits cannot be mixed up anyhow. It would be impossible for men marked by their customs and traditions for the Mahar Regiment to be sent to the Dogras, or for the Afridi Battalion and the Lingayats to be mixed. The "untouchables" in the Chamar Battalion would not be accepted in a composite unit; yet as a unit the Chamars have acquitted themselves well in the 268th Independent Brigade of the Fourteenth Army, a brigade which, in defiance of tradition and established practice, has been wholly Indian instead of being constituted in accordance with the old and tried recipe of one British, one Indian and one Gurkha Battalion. Those who reckon on the establishment of Pakistan must face even greater complications than have yet presented themselves—whether there are to be wholly separate Hindu, Mahomedan and Sikh armies, and whether the Hindu Army will have room, as has the Indian Army of to-day, for casteless units.

Apart from those social and communal aspects of the problem of the Army, there is the overwhelming question of finance. The Indian public ought by now to be in a position to contemplate its future burden involved in defence; but it is not, and is not likely to be, in that position until the findings of the Wilcox Committee are published. That Committee, which was a sort of fact-finding and advisory body emanating from G.H.Q., was appointed in 1944 to consider the future of India's armed forces, in particular the Army, and to find out the views of the public. Its expert recommendations presumably form the basis of any plans that the Government may have in view, but there is as yet no public knowledge of the cost of carrying out those plans.

In addressing the National Defence Council, the C.-in-C. hinted at the extent of what may be necessary, and insisted that the budget for the three Services should be taken as a whole—"each cannot be considered in isolation: all must be considered together and a proper proportion fixed between them." It is a sound principle, but its adoption will make the defence budget appear enormous compared with what it was before the war. The R.I.N. has grown almost out of recognition, and the C.-in.-C. says it must have some bigger ships than its present corvettes and frigates, and he hopes it will have at least a cruiser or two. Similarly, he thinks the ten squadrons of the R.I.A.F., which have only been completed with difficulty, are not enough, and that for the time being squadrons of the R.A.F. must be stationed in India. He has given no clue to what he thinks should be the strength of the Indian Army, but it may be considerably larger than the pre-war total of about 200,000. His main point relates not to the numerical strength of the Army but to its composition: it "must contain a proper proportion of all the various arms—armoured corps, infantry, artillery, engineers, signals, transport and so on, so that it shall be a self-contained Army, able to take the field without seeking aid from elsewhere."

Judging by past experience, it will not be surprising if Indian political leaders kick hard at the cost of the three fighting Services and urge their rapid reduction. The cost of the R.I.N. in particular will disturb them, for India is not accustomed to the burden of defending herself at sea. There may also be objections to the project of maintaining a self-contained Army. During the war the Indian Army has received its very costly modern equipment with which to form its Royal Indian Regiment of Artillery, and to convert its cavalry into Armoured Corps with modern tanks, at what is described in the *Times of India* as being practically a "no-cost basis." India has, moreover, to face the idea that the Army should be organised and trained as a fighting machine for purposes of defence, and not be scattered all over the country to maintain internal security. "An Army's job," said Sir Claude Auchinleck, "is to make itself fit for war and not to act in peace as a glorified police force in aid of the civil power." As no Province in India has ever spent enough money on its police to be able to dispense with the help of the Army, and of the Auxiliary Force of European and Anglo-Indian volunteers, in times of emergency, there is then the prospect of a request for additional expenditure on the police—and that would certainly be opposed by the Provincial Councils. Self-government and self-defence are going to prove very expensive.

SAMUEL T. SHEPPARD

A WILD GOOSE CHASE

It was more like a meet of foxhounds than any bird-watching expedition I have ever been on. When our party from London arrived at the West Country marsh that was our destination, we found that a car-load from Bristol was already there. Shortly afterwards, cars full of ornithological pundits drove up from Oxford and Birmingham. Altogether, nineteen people were assembled in a very muddy farmyard at the end of a very muddy lane. After gum-boots had been donned and luncheon packed into haversacks, we moved off in fairly close formation under our general, a local bird-watcher.

The reason why this particular marsh had suddenly become the cynosure for bird-watchers from all over southern England, was the appearance there the previous week of two specimens of a bird that had only once before been certainly identified in the British Isles, the Lesser White-fronted Goose. What was more, for the first time for that particular locality, all four of the normal British grey geese (Grey-Lag, Bean, Pink-foot and White-front), together with two black geese (Barnacle, Brent) had been seen there on one day. Without doubt a feast to set before an ornithological king.

Unfortunately, numbers were against us. The best number for a bird-watching expedition is the same as the best number for a committee, in Bernard Shaw's estimation—one. We had eighteen too many. However, our general was equal to the situation. He split us up into three parties, each of which had to squeeze itself into one of the pill-boxes which some ornithological good fairy had directed the War Office to construct overlooking the marsh in the dark days. There we had to sit and wait for the geese to come to us, a much less risky procedure than going to look for them.

Goose-watching is thought by many to be the peak of bird-watching delights. This is partly because it is so hard to get any nearer the birds than will enable you to say that they are geese, that when you do get within a hundred yards or so you feel amply rewarded for your efforts by the sight of these very wild creatures browsing peacefully in front of you just like the portly ganders of the farmyard. Partly also it is due to the fact that it takes you to such fascinating places. Fascinating is perhaps not the word that would be applied by everybody to the marshes and mudflats where geese are seen, but to the initiated they are worth all the mountains in the world. Anyone can admire a mountain—and here I am with Lamb, who did not care if he never saw a mountain in his life—but it takes a greater degree of sophistication to appreciate the beauties of the flat lands.

When we arrived on the scene, the geese had been feeding on the fields behind the marsh. Our advent put them up with a glorious clangour, but, alas, they came down on a mudbank in the estuary. So we had to bide our time, eat our lunch, and content ourselves with reminiscing and examining the antics of two carrion-crows that occupied the stage like two clowns sent on to crack jokes while the scenes are being shifted. Interest was kept up by the constant appearance of little prospecting parties of geese, but they evidently did not like what they saw, for they did not alight. At last, a bigger clangour announced the restlessness of a larger body of geese. They flew round cackling in a loose flock, far removed from the traditional V-shape of all the picture-books, until some geese, bolder or hungrier than the rest, led the way to earth. The rest followed in driblets, till well over a thousand geese were gathered on the marsh in front of one of the pill-boxes. The zenith of the day had arrived.

The lucky pill-box, as we approached it from one of the unlucky ones, looked like a picture from the fall of Calais, except that telescopes and field-glasses took the place of rifles and bren-guns. The top and sides were lined with eager bird-watchers anxiously raking the great host of White-fronted Geese for the one or two strangers, separable on such small points of difference as a whiter forehead, a yellow eye-rim and a distinctive gait. When all the geese are feeding with their heads down this is verily like seeking the proverbial needle in the proverbial haystack. When they have their heads up it is not so bad, but that means they are alarmed and about to take flight.

After three-quarters of an hour's hard work—and it is hard work searching a flock of a thousand or so geese with a telescope—the pundits found the Lesser White-front, and we were privileged to see the first of their race known to have visited the British Isles since Alfred Crawhall Chapman, brother of the more famous Abel, shot a young gander at Fenham Flats on the coast of Northumberland on September 16th, 1886. Abel Chapman, writing in 1924, commented that the second example might not occur within the century; we therefore had the satisfaction of beating him by forty-one years.

The Lesser White-front rather overshadowed the other delights of the day. To see a flock of between one and two thousand White-fronted Geese is in itself an ornithological feast of no mean order. We also contrived to see, either on that day or the next, the Bean, the Grey-lag, the Barnacle and the Brent. The Pink-feet had evidently moved on since the previous week when there were a hundred or more present. It was remarkable how hard it was to find these other singleton geese among the hosts of the White-fronts. On the second day, two of us raked the advancing army of White-fronts five or six times. On two runs we spotted the Brent and on one the Bean. On none of them did we see the Grey-lag, the Barnacle or the Lesser White-front, all of which had been seen the previous day, when neither the Bean nor the Brent had been. When you realise that the Brent, for instance, has a completely black head and neck, while the adult White-front, besides being rather bigger, has an ashy-brown head and neck, with a marked white patch round the base of the bill, it seems impossible that you could fail to pick out a Brent from among a pack of White-fronts about 300 yards away on four times out of six. That you can do so explains one of the more recondite charms of bird-watching, in which, as Louis Napoleon said of politics, "il ne faut jamais dire 'jamais'".

R. S. R. FITTER

THE MOVIES

"The Last Chance," at the Empire.
"To-morrow is Forever," at the Odeon.
"The Last Hill," at the Tatler.
"Saratoga Trunk," and "Echo of Applause," at Warner's.

Too hard a bump on the ice has kept me away from cinemas for some days. I missed, therefore, the event of the week and perhaps of many weeks: the Swiss refugee film that opens at the Empire on Friday. Luckily my colleague, Mr. Raymond Mortimer, was able to attend the press-show. He writes as follows:

"*Marie-Louise* was the first Swiss movie, *The Last Chance* is the second. What a lot the Swiss still have to learn! They do not even know (1) that a "first feature film" must cost at least one million pounds, of which—this is essential—at least half has been wasted; (2) that the more "serious" the subject of a film, the more necessary it becomes to distract the spectator's attention from it with lashings of sex at its sultriest. The poor dears are therefore content to offer us a thrilling story, brilliant directing, beautiful photography, and masterly acting. I have never seen a better made film than *The Last Chance*. It is the story of two British officers and an American sergeant, escaped prisoners in North Italy, who risk their own chance of crossing the frontier into Switzerland in order to conduct a band of refugee civilians—women, children and old men—across the snows to safety, with the Germans always hard upon their heels. The film is acted in ten languages—for the refugees come from all over Europe—with sub-titles making the action perfectly clear. It is perhaps a mistake, and certainly an over-simplification, to have made all the characters—except one Fascist—not only noble but agreeable. The persecuted are not invariably disciplined and delightful, and I suspect that in such a situation the soldiers would in fact have had to deal with some very tiresome and recalcitrant individuals. But this point did not strike me till afterwards: watching the film, I was continuously excited and deeply moved. A glimpse of a trainload of deportees herded by the Germans; an old scholar burdened with a large suitcase of manuscripts representing years of research (and at the end they flutter away over the snow); the panic flight when the Germans are heard approaching; the nightmare plodding in a blizzard through knee-deep snow—the film uncovers a world in which human beings are treated worse than cattle. Never has the wickedness of political and racial persecution, the monstrosity of human suffering, been more trenchantly exposed. And the ghastly thing is that, with Fascism defeated, there are still some countries where race or opinion turns men and women into hunted or carted animals. The UNO delegates have been treated to *Caesar and Cleopatra*; *The Last Chance* is an incomparably better film at which I should like to make their attendance compulsory. But I must insist that even if it did not carry the most urgent of messages, this film must be seen for its technical brilliance and above all for the superb acting."

Gathering up at the last moment the other films I had missed I went first to see Mr. Orson Welles at the Odeon. A manufactured part: the handsome young American goes off to war in 1917 and comes back twenty-five years later as a crippled Austrian scientist with a beard and an accent. Does this transformation convince? No. Make-up, not wounds and plastic surgery, has given Mr. Welles a new face as interesting as the old. Then the accent: is that supposed to be put on or not? However, though we see through the disguises, Mr. Welles makes a figure to capture the eye. With one arm half-paralysed and one foot painfully turned in, dressed always in shabby black, awkwardly breaking into a smile, unapproachably kind, he keeps our uneasy sympathy: a considerable achievement. Miss Colbert, as the wife to whom he will return only as a stranger, brings her usual charm and a more than usual feeling. The direction, too, of Irving Pichel shows imagination. What a pity we have watched the scenery being pushed on, the trap-doors being tried, the actors taking their places! And—this is a more persistent regret—what has been happening in the last eighteen months to Mr. Welles, the director?

The Last Hill is a story of five marines who die in the defence of Sevastopol; crude, heroic, catching light from the memories it celebrates. *Saratoga Trunk*, very sweet to eye, brings back New Orleans and Saratoga Springs in the Nineties, with Ingrid Bergmann and Gary Cooper as lovers, a dwarf in attendance (as lively as the tune that accompanies him), and a melodramatic free-for-all finish: recalls Clair's *The Belle of New Orleans*, a gayer and better-made film. The second feature at Warner's is a modestly entertaining account of the film's early history, from camera obscura to zoetrope, Lumière to Keystone, which members of the New London Film Society might visit as an introduction to the revivals offered them on Sunday afternoons.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

RADIO NOTES

Family Relationships. Having been unfortunate enough to miss the first programme in this series, the second made me sit forward in my chair, wondering—hardened as I am to the genteel evasions of the B.B.C.—whether my ears were deceiving me. Did I really hear the word "brothel"—uttered quite naturally, too, and without the usual snigger? "Despair," "Tenderness," "emotional under-development" (were any Americans listening?)—all the phrases which stick in British throats, conditioned as we are by upbringing to find them embarrassing, unmanly, sissified: there they were being handed about as legal tender. A most refreshing experience, and one which spoke more eloquently for the intelligence, sanity and good feeling of ordinary people in this country to-day than the aspect of the daily press would seem to imply. So lively and natural was the atmosphere in the studio that an effect of complete spontaneity was often (though not always) achieved. One got the impression, which is not as usual as it ought to be, that the speakers really meant what they said; were using words, not to conceal thought, but to express genuine ideas; and were more interested in the truth than in putting something across. The result was that a good deal did come across, and that the beer-and-skittles view of post-war life was seen to lead nowhere. Spiritual dislocation has taken place on a vast scale, and nothing can cure this except forbearance and co-operation.

The Dark Tower. I consider this piece Louis MacNeice's most remarkable achievement in the medium, and among the half-dozen most moving dramatic broadcasts I have ever heard. The persuasions of the theme reckon, of course, with far-off memories of the Prince's Quest—that endless dice game, with its "Ogre's Castle: wait 2 moves," "Haunted Dell: go round circle," "Ten League Boots: go on to No. 247." But it required a poet of noble and adult mind to re-invent the characters and scenery for us. This was done with imagination and economy, and an eloquent sense of crescendo. Britten's music achieved overwhelmingly dramatic effects by the simplest of means, and it was clever of him to end the programme on a dominant seventh—the most obvious of the chords which call for resolution . . . Cyril Cusack, as Roland, was indeed the voice of Youth—a Rilkean hero; and in the part of the drunken solipsist, Robert Farquharson was magnificently corrupt. I thought the women, with the exception of Neaera, considerably less good; they gave me the impression of not understanding their lines. This drawback, and some rather elementary errors of production, were the only blots on a most beautiful and thrilling programme, which calls for an early repeat.

An oasis has suddenly arisen in the dusty desert of Saturday evening: the Gramophone department is broadcasting the entire series of Beethoven's String Quartets at 11.3. But I feel it to be unfortunate that the first two quartets in the series should not have been given in the best available recordings, and that the records used were in bad condition, thus, no doubt, confirming the prejudice (enjoyed by so many people) that a string quartet is necessarily scratchy and unpleasant.

RADIO RECOMMENDATIONS.—*February 3rd.* They Say It Works Wonders (7 p.m.); Has India Changed? (E. M. Forster, 9.15 p.m.); Scrapbook for 1919 (9.30 p.m.).

February 4th. Book Talk (V. S. Pritchett, 6.20 p.m.); The Insect Play (9.15 p.m.).

February 5th. Piano Recital (Monique Haas, 10.15 p.m.).

February 6th. Film Review (Henry Reed, Midland, 6.30 p.m.); French Orchestra Concert (Albert Wolff, 7 p.m.); The Gioconda Smile (10 p.m.).

February 8th. Short Story (W. W. Jacobs, 3.45 p.m.); Socialism *v.* The Road Hauliers (7.30 p.m.); The Customer is always Right (9.30 p.m.); Poems by Edith Sitwell (11.30 p.m.).

February 9th. Magic and Medicine (L.P. 1.15 p.m.); Chamber Orchestra (3.35 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST.

TWO SHOWS

THE Soviet Theatre Exhibition at Dorland Hall includes charming models as well as *maquettes* and photographs. Throughout this century the Russians have surpassed all other peoples in the theatrical arts, and I readily believe Mr. Priestley who says in his introduction to the catalogue that both in quantity and in quality the Soviet Theatre must be judged the best in the world to-day. The regime has done wonders to encourage what I (unlike Mr. Priestley) consider the exceptional histrionic gifts of the Russians. The theatre in the U.S.S.R. occupies, he says, "an honoured place in the community and the production of plays there is a properly organised communal activity and not, as it is here, a chaotic scramble for easy money." This Exhibition does not make clear how far the official reaction against "modernism" has affected the theatre, but most of the designs display either a realism derived from Stanislavski or an opulence reminiscent of Benois and Bakst. The work of Ryndin and Shifrin, who seem the most gifted designers, is more elegant than original. A setting for Mr. Somerset Maugham's *The Circle* offers a surprising version of an English country house, but perhaps its palatial magnificence is satirical in intention. The Exhibition covers an impressive variety of activities, including children's theatres, amateur theatres, and the theatre of eight different nationalities. Films and lectures are given every day. I do not see how any Englishman could visit the Exhibition without feeling shame at the absurd inferiority of the theatre here.

Nobody who is interested in experimental art should miss the exhibition at the Arcade Gallery of Sculpture of L. Peri. In his opinion, we are told, "concrete should be to the sculptor of our time what marble, stone, and wood were to the Greeks, the Medieval and Renaissance sculptors." This strikes me as mystical bosh. For what conceivable reason "should" sculptors confine themselves to this coarse medium, merely because they have the misfortune to live in the twentieth century? On the other hand, if Mr. Peri likes to work in concrete, he is perfectly entitled to do so, and have his work judged, not *a priori* by his odd taste in material but by the effect it makes. The *Large Girl in Red* is, I think, wrecked by the quality of the medium, but in *Fireman's Life* concrete is used very skilfully to execute a spirited and interesting composition. Strikingly successful, too, are what he calls "verticals"—small figures projecting horizontally so that one seems to be looking down at them from the air. The effect is enhanced by the use of colours. Mr. Peri is a sculptor no less remarkable for his accomplishments than for his inventiveness.

ROGER MARVELL

Correspondence

DOCTORS AND THE STATE

SIR,—Less than sixty years ago that experienced patient, R. L. Stevenson, dedicated a book of verse to doctors. To him the physician—and he clearly meant the ordinary practising doctor—appeared as one who stands "almost as a rule" above the common herd. "He is the flower," he wrote (such as it is) "of our civilisation; and when that stage of man is done with . . . he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race." Whether Stevenson, were he now alive, would deem "our civilisation" still to be extant I do not know, but to-day he could at least find the doctor he knew and

praised, following his profession, practising his art and distinguishable from his fellows. I doubt if the doctor, in this sense, will be discoverable a generation hence.

He will, I fear, have been eliminated, not of set purpose, but as an unforeseen consequence of social planning and of the error of regarding him as a technical unit rather than as a man practising the art of medicine. I think even some planners will regret his extinction and the folk for whom they plan may well regret it very deeply; but once gone, it will not be possible to remake him, and it may be worth while to pause and think before the machinery of liquidation is actually set going. May I try to explain by analogy to you, sir, what I believe must happen?

A not impossible Government might decide to supply to every citizen "free" (in return for a compulsory weekly payment) one or more daily and weekly newspapers—of course, "the best obtainable"—to be produced by non-competitive teams of salaried editors employed by the Ministry of Information and working at municipal Truth Centres, from which alone the journals would be issued. Independent journalism would not, at least at first, be forbidden by law but everything possible would be done to discourage it and to persuade the citizen to be content with the official publications.

If this scheme went through and prospered is it not clear that though "editors," busy at their teamwork, could be seen in office hours at any Truth Centre in the country, the editor—in the sense that you, sir, yourself are one—could be no more?

I am not here concerned to discuss the case for a Comprehensive National News Service or for Truth Centres. It should, I suppose, seem as convincing to any good Socialist as it seems fallacious to an individualist like myself. The press can be trusted to ensure that even the conception, let alone the birth, of such a thing does not occur, so it has no practical import. The sole point I wish to make is that such a service, in exact proportion to its success, would eliminate the genus "editor." He must perish with his journal as the doctor with his practice, and his permanent disappearance would be part of the cost of such a national service. Do the common people of this country really wish to wake up 15 or 20 years hence to find the doctor gone?

Hampstead. LINDSEY W. BATTEN

LAND GIRLS

SIR,—I have recently been released from the W.L.A. and the difference in the provision made for women of the Land Army on demobilisation and those of the other Services has been forcibly brought home to me.

I worked for a timber firm in Devon, in a job previously held by a man, and my successor has just been demobbed from the R.A.F. When I left Devon I was given a travel voucher to Heysham, and then had to pay my steamer fare to Belfast, £1 14*s.*, as the Land Army only give vouchers for travel in England and Wales. I had 29 days between leaving the W.L.A., and starting my new job, so I applied for unemployment benefit. At the end of three weeks I was given £1 5*s.* 8*d.*, which did not cover cost of my steamer ticket, much less provide a livelihood for three weeks. Had I been a member of any other of the women's services, I would have had my fare home, and 56 days' paid leave.

On demobilisation, members of the Land Army, many of whom have done arduous work for five years, get no gratuity, no paid leave, no grant for clothing, no extra clothing coupons. They have to return their uniform, for which they have surrendered coupons, and which is unsuitable for ordinary wear in any case. The girls in the L.A. have worked hard, often far from their own homes, in isolated places and in all weathers, with six days' leave a year. Is their contribution to the war effort of so little value that they deserve no recognition? It must be so.

But it seems to me that some more adequate provision should be made to help them to bridge the gap between leaving the Land Army and starting a civilian job. HESTER MAYLIEN

701 Lisburn Road,
Belfast.

THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES

SIR,—To be reviewed on the "Books in General" page by such an eminent critic as Mr. Raymond Mortimer is so great an honour that only an author seething in bile could fail to be flattered by it. The main object of this letter, therefore, is not to show ingratitude to Mr. Mortimer but to call attention to the difference between the treatment accorded to French writers of the resistance and that meted out to English writers moved by similar emotions. In France, after five years of Nazi rule, the *saeva indignatio* of the patriot against the politicians who betrayed his country is not regarded as evidence that he is suffering from jaundice. A French reviewer who put such an interpretation on, for example, a fully-documented indictment of Laval and Co. would himself become the object of suspicion. How different is the English press, how "impartial," how detached! Here an author who attempts, after years of preliminary study, to analyse the causes which led to recent war can be accused anonymously of "stupendous intellectual conceit," while a reasoned criticism of, shall we say, Hitler's British admirers is dismissed with the suggestion that he is "disgruntled," or cannot pay his rent.

Not only are books by anti-Fascists often deliberately misrepresented, but reviewers seem to think themselves at liberty to make the most wounding personal remarks about their authors. Even Mr. Mortimer, most polite and urbane of critics, must needs inform the readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION that "an unhappy marriage, an uncertain income, some disappointed ambitions" have produced a "bitter-tasting book" and add that Tory humorists may think that "among Intellectuals of the Left jaundice is a vocational disease."

"Why does Mr. Mortimer say we are unhappily married?" my wife asked indignantly when she read this passage. "Does he mean that if you earned more money, had realised your 'ambitions' and been married to someone else for the past 20 years, you would have taken a kindlier view of the Conservative ruling class and some of their leaders?" I had, reluctantly, to admit that that appeared to be Mr. Mortimer's argument. The idea that after 20 years of bad government, ending in a colossal massacre, followed by a foretaste of atom-bombery, an Englishman could possibly criticise his politicians except for the temperamental reasons he enumerates, does not seem to have occurred to him.

Judging from their press, any Frenchman, outside Vichy or a loony bin, would find both the argument and the attitude fantastic. DOUGLAS GOLDRING

Stonar House, Middle Street, Deal.

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "First, I offer my apologies to Mrs. Goldring, but how was I to guess that she could thus misunderstand me? For in his book Mr. Goldring confides to us the story of his first marriage and gives a sardonic account of its collapse. Secondly, I twice expressed agreement with his indignation at our Governments in the Thirties. My complaint was that his rancour overflowed upon persons who had done nothing to deserve it, several of them no less active than himself in their opposition to Fascism."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

INDEPENDENT CINEMA

SIR,—Although I have been a regular reader of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for more than twenty years, it was a curious mischance which prevented me from seeing your notice in the issue dated January 19th, otherwise this letter would have been sent to you last Monday. In your review you write:

Will the independent cinema get shouldered out like the "free" public house? I hope not, how-

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JONATHAN CAPE

ever benevolently inclined Mr. Rank and his rivals or associates may be. He intends to show the Cocteau film when the Curzon reopens in February—good.

Many reading the above may easily suppose the Curzon Cinema was in some way connected with Mr. Rank or his associates. I am the owner of the Curzon which is an independent cinema and in no way connected with Mr. Rank or his organisation. It so happens that the cinema is reopening with a film the English distribution rights of which have been acquired by Mr. Rank. I should have preferred the original title *L'Eternel Retour* to *Love Eternal*, but otherwise the film is going to be shown in its original version with English sub-titles. Should I have refused to show an outstanding film because the Rank organisation have Anglicised the title? It is not difficult to guess why the title has been changed.

Whilst the Rank bait is dangled before the French producers, there is little chance of the independent cinema owner being able to come to reasonable terms with the French producers for the exhibition of outstanding films. Only time will show whether the public here will want to see French films in their original or dubbed versions in ordinary suburban or local cinemas. If Mr. Rank's attempt is successful then it is plain the Continental producers of outstanding pictures must inevitably seek a deal with the owners of large circuits.

However, I can assure you that whatever happens the Curzon will always remain independent and I will endeavour to show outstanding films whatever their origin or subsequent destination. I hope you will not consider me unduly sensitive in writing to you at such length, but it so happens that I am the owner of a number of cinemas and theatres and humble as my position comparatively is, some persons reading your criticism might erroneously imagine that I had in some way become connected or associated with the Rank organisation. H. H. WINGATE

8, Stratton Street, W.1.

BUREAUCRATIC IRRELEVANCE

SIR,—A psychologist who sits beside me in the British Museum reading-room told me this week that he had been denied two books for which he had sent in the usual requisition slip. They were on the "special" (i.e., pornography) shelf, and could not be consulted without the permission of the supervisor. I asked my friend what outrageous works he had wanted. He replied: "Marie Stopes's *Married Love*, and Havelock Ellis's *Psychology of Sex*."

It seems scarcely credible that an institution designed for the exclusive use of recognised students should withhold books that have been freely circulated in every public library and sold at every railway bookstall. MAURICE CRANSTON

South Wood Avenue,
Highgate.

STEPNIAK

SIR,—Because of its local interest, I quoted passages from Mr. H. G. Wyatt's letter about Stepniak, which appeared in your issue of January 5th, in the *Acton Gazette*. This morning, a very old resident of Acton came to see me. He wanted to impress upon me that none of the boys he knew would have thought of throwing stones at Stepniak, whom he remembered as "a real gentleman, a Russian exile with a very bushy beard, and a fur-lined overcoat," because they liked and respected him so much. He used to give them sweets and money.

The accident in which Stepniak was killed took place not at the footbridge Mr. Wyatt mentions, but at a point very near my informant's home, where a footpath from Bedford Park crossed the railway line to reach Warple Way and the Uxbridge Road, not twenty minutes' walk from Blenheim Road, where Stepniak lived. Stepniak had crossed a stile and come out on the crossing in front of a train. He was pushed between forty and sixty feet along the track and killed. It was the third accident to happen at that point. JOAN PRESTON

LT. COL. G. R. GAYRE v NEW STATESMAN and NATION

ON Wednesday, January 23rd, in the High Court of Justice, before Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson, the proceedings for libel brought by Lt. Col. G. R. Gayre against Mr. Kingsley Martin, the publishers and The Cornwall Press Limited, were mentioned. The following agreed statement was read to the Court:

In the London Diary of the issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for the 5th August, 1944, reference was made to the possible appointment of the Plaintiff, Lt. Col. G. R. Gayre, to the post of Chief Allied Education Officer in Germany, and objection was taken to such appointment on the ground that Colonel Gayre "agreed with the racial philosophy of the Nazis" and that in a book by him recently published, entitled *Teuton and Slav on the Polish Frontier*, he had shown that he still based his views on the post-war world on strictly racial lines.

Colonel Gayre immediately brought these proceedings for libel against the editor, the publishers, and the printers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, alleging that the said words meant and were intended to mean and were understood to mean that the Plaintiff, though holding his said rank in His Majesty's Forces and occupying his aforesaid positions, and likely to become Chief (Allied) Education Officer in Germany, was in fact a secret sympathiser with the Nazis and with their theory of being the master race in Europe, that he was such a person, who, if he occupied such a position would be likely to act in concert with the Nazis in the propagation of their views, and would assist them in so doing to the detriment of the Allied education projects for Germany and Germans after the war, thereby imperilling the future peace of Europe.

That the Plaintiff was an unfit person to occupy the said position or any important position under the Allied Governments in Germany after the war, that he was antagonistic to the object for which Great Britain and the Empire were fighting, that he was possessed of and so imbued with the ideology of the enemy and that he, as an official and instrument of the Allied Governments for the post-war education of Germans was unworthy of his rank or position and was a potential traitor to the Allied cause and one who was likely to frustrate the Allied methods of bringing home to the enemy the falsity of the Nazi racial superiority, and that he had written the said book to further the said Nazi ideology and to support their views and the manner in which they sought to impose them upon Europe and the world.

The Defendants are anxious to take this opportunity of recording that nothing could have been further from their minds than to suggest any of these imputations on the Plaintiff, and if the words used could be so understood, then the Defendants not only did not so intend but gladly state that there is no foundation whatsoever for such imputations. They have never regarded the Plaintiff as other than a loyal citizen and an efficient officer, and are aware that the Plaintiff proved himself to be both during the course of the War.

The Defendants realise that Colonel Gayre has been put to trouble, anxiety and expense in this matter, and they are happy to make this explanation and to indemnify him in respect of the costs he has incurred.

The action was therefore withdrawn.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

TWENTY-THREE years have passed since the death of Katherine Mansfield; she was thirty-three, far short of maturity when she died, and her Collected Stories* and sketches, many of them unfinished, make a book only 800 pages long. A small talent, puritanical and restrictive: but it is not fanciful to see a connection between her choice of the brief form of writing, her eye for the agitated and evanescent, the breathless moment that crystallises like a diamond of snow and then dissolves in the tepid current of daily life—between these and the knowledge that she might not have long to live.

All the same, other invalid writers have not been so affected; and in attempting to define the kind of writer Katherine Mansfield was, it is necessary to look beyond her invalidism. The more we read her, the more we are confirmed in the belief that she was one of the inevitable casualties of a pioneering, new and shallow-rooted society. She is the exquisite colonial, the prim exile, who belongs neither to England nor New Zealand, and who has been obliged to live like some nervous spider in a web that is ingeniously spun between these places, a delicate web, stronger than it looks and dew-starred with strange images. In the new countries the strenuous cult of optimism appears to secrete private despair, a scratchy and cynical Nihilism. We see it in Mark Twain, in Poe and in more recent writers of the new countries. In Faulkner and Hemingway, for example, the inner life has gone bad. One may detect the same symptoms in Katherine Mansfield's mind, and she came to be aware of it, for she tried, all her life, to emerge and to recreate "a clean heart" within herself and a web of her own to live in. Such a cult of self-perfection was bound for a long time to be egotistical, prim and even arty, and must have limited her confidence as a writer. Mr. Middleton Murry, in one of his introductions to her work, sums up the aspirations of her *Journal* with the words: "Art . . . is the utterance of Life through a completely submissive being"; and here is no doubt that Katherine Mansfield had the ascetic notion of freeing herself from "Self." This ungenial and rather dubious doctrine may indeed describe a part of the process called Art; but it is demonstrably inapplicable to many major writers of prose fiction, and one must regret that the fashion of her period and her own circumstances led Katherine Mansfield to torture herself with an introspection that was bound to be sterile.

The regret is strengthened when we compare her stories with Chehov's, under whose influence much of her work was done. After him, she concentrated on the "moment of truth" rather than on plot or even character in her stories; more precisely she sought to isolate the cry of ecstasy or the cry of fear or loneliness in her people. (It is untrue, incidentally, that her stories have no plots; this is true only of her imitators who disastrously misread her work and lacked her talent as a story-teller.) But in Chehov we find an indispensable element which is strong in his writing and weak in hers: the sense of a country, a place; the sense of the unseen characters, the anonymous people, what we may call "the others," from which the people of his stories are taken. Katherine Mansfield's *At the Bay* is one of the minor masterpieces of our language—but who are these people, who are their neighbours, what is the world they belong to? We can scarcely guess. Too self-sufficiently, they drop out of the sky and fill the little canvas. There is no silent character in the background. True, there is the mystery of life and death, suggested by the grandmother's memories of her dead son. But in a story like Chehov's *The Steppe* there is something else besides the mystery of life and death: Russia, the condition of Russia, is the silent character, always haunting us. And this is so true of the bulk of Chehov's work, that one is led to an important conclusion about what is called "the plotless" short story: this kind of story depends upon its power to suggest things more mysterious or more powerful than itself. There are gaps and silences in the "plotless" short story: fatally limiting, if we do not detect in those silences the murmur of a containing society of other human beings. Katherine Mansfield's own rootlessness, her fretful attempts to break down her isolation from her country, by purifying and isolating herself, made her the kind of writer who draws in her horns. It is significant that she criticised Virginia Woolf for being a "deliberate" writer.

All the same, it is idle to blame (or to praise) writers for limitations which may be due to their position in society or their time. We have the virtues of our shortcomings; and good writing is the fruit of a struggle with total disadvantages. Out of the impossible comes the best. When we take Katherine Mansfield's stories as they are, we see what original and sometimes superlative use she made of herself. Rootless, isolated, puritan, catty, repentantly over-fond? She made stories as clear as glass. Isolated, she seeks to describe how people feel and think when they are alone. Can one find a more precise portrait of a play-acting, adolescent girl than Beryl in *At the Bay*, a more terrifying notion of what it may be like to be a cynical woman of a certain age than Mrs. Harry Kember in the same story:

> "That's better," said Mrs. Harry Kember. They began to go down the beach together. "Really, it's a sin for you to wear clothes, my dear. Somebody's got to tell you some day."
>
> The water was quite warm. It was marvellous transparent blue, flecked with silver, but the sand at the bottom looked gold, when you kicked with your toes there rose a little puff of gold dust. Now the waves just reached her breast. Beryl stood, her arms outstretched, gazing out, and as each wave came she gave the slightest little jump, so that it seemed it was the wave which lifted her so gently.
>
> "I believe in pretty girls having a good time," said Mrs. Harry Kember. "Why not? Don't you make a mistake, my dear. Enjoy yourself." And suddenly she turned turtle, disappeared, and swam away quickly, like a rat. Then she flicked round and began swimming back. She was going to say something else. Beryl felt that she was being poisoned by this cold woman, but she longed to hear. But oh, how strange, how horrible! As Mrs. Harry Kember came up close she looked, in her black waterproof bathing cap, with her sleepy face lifted above the water, just her chin touching, like a horrible caricature of her husband.

We see through all these people, one by one, as they will never see through themselves. And Stanley Burnell, the back-slapping, go-getting business man with his awful energy and his hopelessly egotistical remorse, provides another light on the desire for isolation. It is Romantic—life-wish as well as death-wish: his morning bathe is ruined because his neighbour has got into the Pacific Ocean before him. The Pacific has been spoiled. It is like being beaten on the customer's doorstep by your competitor. Katherine Mansfield may have rejected an enormous amount of material; but she did get that key character, the business man, into her doll's house.

It is a truism—but one so neglected by writers of short stories that one must repeat it—that the telling of stories, plot or no plot, depends upon the writer's use of surprise. In the "plotless" story, one must move from one unexpected word, image or sentence, to the next, even less expected, and all must be effortless, limpid, quick. In this sparkling quality Katherine Mansfield excelled when she was at her best—and I would put *Prelude*, *At the Bay*, *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*, *The Woman at the Store*, *Pictures*, *The Garden Party* and *The Little Governess* in this class—and here she added something to the technique of story writing. I am thinking of the grace with which she drops dramatically back into the past or slides into the thoughts and daydreams of her characters. Her writing changes its landscapes as noiselessly as they are changed in our minds and with the alacrity of Nature. The young girl acting her imaginary life before the mirror, then catching herself at it, repenting, vowing she will never do such a thing again, beginning to act once more in the middle of her remorse, and then going down to the drawing-room to pose without knowing it—all those subtle changes which another writer would analyse, argue or edge with a moral, glance and flutter with the freedom of a bird passing through sunlight and shadow. The vulgar daydreams, the poor thoughts of Miss Moss, who can't get a job, and who becomes a prostitute, are just as adroitly caught. Every sentence astonishes:

> "Well, that's over," she sighed. "It's one comfort to be off my feet. And my nose will soon get cool in the air . . . It's very nice in here. Look at the sparrows. Cheep. Cheep. How close they come. I expect somebody feeds them. No, I've nothing for you, you cheeky little things . . ." She looked away from them. What was the big building opposite—The Café de Madrid? My goodness, what a smack that little child came down! Poor little mite! Never mind—up again . . . By eight o'clock to-night . . . Café de Madrid. "I could just go in and sit there and have a coffee, that's all," thought Miss Moss. "It's such a place for artists, too. I might just have a stroke of luck . . . A dark handsome gentleman in a fur coat comes in with a friend, and sits at my table, perhaps. 'No, old chap, I've searched London for a contralto and I can't find a soul. You see, the music is difficult; have a look at it.'" And Miss Moss heard herself saying "Excuse me, I happen to be a contralto, and I have sung that part many times" . . . "Extraordinary! Come back to my studio and I'll try your voice now" . . . Ten pounds a week . . . Why should I feel nervous? It's not nervousness. Why shouldn't I go to the Café de Madrid? I'm a respectable woman, I'm a contralto singer. And I'm only trembling because I've had nothing to eat to-day . . . "A nice little piece of evidence, *my lady*" . . . Very well, Mrs. Pine. Café de Madrid. They have concerts there in the evenings . . . "Why don't they begin?" The contralto has not arrived . . . "Excuse me, I happen to be a contralto; I have sung that music many times."
>
> It was almost dark in the café. Men, palms, red plush seats, white marble tables, waiters in aprons, Miss Moss walked through them all. Hardly had she sat down when a very stout gentleman wearing a very small hat that floated on the top of his head like a little yacht flopped into the chair opposite hers.
>
> "Good evening!" said he.
>
> Miss Moss said, in her cheerful way: "Good evening!"

Katherine Mansfield liquefied the short story. She destroyed many of its formal conventions. She cut out the introductions, the ways and means which are simply barriers. She cut across country, following a line which must have seemed erratic to her early readers, but which is really the direct line. Her early sketches, *In a German Pension*, which are very uneven, though not all as poor as she thought them, show how much of this quickness she owed to listening to people talk. She learned that one or two lines of talk can displace whole paragraphs of description or narrative argument. And she learned, too, how a spoken sentence may start the speaker's own mind on to things absurdly, poetically, strangely at variance with what he or she has said. She caught lives as they dissolved and formed again, and made her stories, very often, about the disparate selves which were set free in the process.

Scratchy and arch, slick and gossipy, mimsy, Katherine Mansfield's manner often was; but the revived art of writing short stories has not, on the whole, drawn the most useful conclusions from her work. Her sensibility, her waywardness were not transferable; but her economy, the boldness of her comic gift, her speed, her dramatic changes of the point of interest, her power to dissolve and reassemble character and situation by a few lines, or to excite by an image, are things that might have been studied more closely. Twenty years after her death it is too soon to define her place, for the sound of our early reading of her work still bewilders and dulls our ear; I fancy her tone will recover some of its early hardness and integrity as time goes on; and I am sure that she is one of those key writers who in their generation mark a new point of departure.

V. S. PRITCHETT

*Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield. Constable. 15s.

THE STATE AND THE PUBLIC

Press, Parliament and People. By FRANCIS WILLIAMS. *Heinemann*, 8s. 6d.

The control of the press, wireless, cinema and other channels of public information, must vary, like the educational system, with the nature of the State. In a Fascist country they must be absolutely State-controlled, because where one Party is controlling the country for its own advantage, any independent source of criticism and information is fatal to the regime. This is also true of a Communist State during the revolutionary period in which Socialist principles are becoming accepted. Theoretically, as soon as there is basic agreement about the new order and its advantages are apparent, the State will wither away. The danger here, of course, lies in the tendency of bureaucracy to maintain control even after the country would have everything to gain by the free play of critical judgment. In a "free capitalist" society, like England in the Victorian period or the United States before the collapse of 1929, the State's only job is to "keep the ring"; most forms of publicity therefore fall into the hands of financial interests, and any interference by the State or, more important, initiative from the Government, is regarded as a dangerous infringement of liberty. As the "positive State" comes into existence, that is, as the State begins actively to remedy some of the vast inequalities and injustices of free enterprise, this private monopoly of publicity is increasingly impossible. The State becomes itself the greatest of public enterprises, and necessarily begins its own publicity services. The difficult problems of this new form of society, the "middle way" of Social Democracy, are the subject of Mr. Francis Williams' book.

No one is in a better position to write on this subject than Mr. Williams, who made his way into journalism, on his own steam, from small beginnings, became Financial Editor and later Editor of the *Daily Herald*, was Controller of News and Censorship during the war, and is now Adviser on Public Relations to the Prime Minister. There is no editor in this country who is not grateful to Francis Williams. At the Ministry of Information he fought hard and successfully to maintain the freedom of the press to criticise freely and to print everything that was not dangerous, from the military point of view. Fortunately, the Chief Censor, Admiral Thomson, was equally sensible, and Mr. Brendan Bracken had enough knowledge of the press and enough understanding of democratic institutions to back his officials. In his first chapters Mr. Williams says enough to show us how nearly we fell, on more than one occasion, into a censorship which would have been equally bad both for our democratic institutions and for the conduct of the war. He begins by recalling the night when the police threw the daily newspapers off the trains because they carried accounts of the British landing in France, which was already public property all over the world. There were times later when the Cabinet, which for the most part understood the value of a critical press, lost its head; later in the war it even imposed a wide and impractical censorship on foreign cables which might be deemed damaging to relations with friendly Powers. Mr. Williams has many stories to tell of these internal fights; this will be revealing to those who read newspapers and pleasantly reminiscent to those who write them.

Britain maintained the right of free criticism during the war to an extent which few of us had dared to hope. At the same time the State greatly added to its powers of influencing public opinion. The Public Relations Officer, whose position Mr. Williams discusses, grew to be a great figure. At first he too often acted as booster for his Minister rather than for the Government as a whole; gradually, however, departmental publicity services became co-ordinated at the Ministry of Information. The "social survey" became a State institution. Mr. Williams rightly says that, while official enquiries into the condition of "public morale" may be dangerous, surveys of public need are just as essential for the State when it goes into business as they were for big firms interested in marketing research. Indeed, Ministers are increasingly becoming public servants, whose job it is to keep as closely as possible in touch with the public, and it is clear that they need as much information as possible about public taste as well as about the curve of demand. The more they know, the more they will be public servants and the less bureaucratically they will behave. In all this the principle must conform to the nature of Social Democracy. That principle may be defined as freedom to criticise and to provide independent news services, but freedom also for the State to gather its own information and to provide its own publicity.

The most controversial and difficult cases are those of the cinema, with which Mr. Williams does not deal, and the B.B.C., which he discusses in a very skimpy and inadequate chapter. The question whether the B.B.C. is to maintain a monopoly or whether it is to have commercial rivals should be thoroughly debated before the Charter is renewed. It may well be that in a world in which foreign wavelengths are easy to obtain, the issue is becoming somewhat academic. Already before the war the B.B.C. had its commercial competitors in Radio Normandie and Luxembourg.

It is in the realm of the Foreign Office that Mr. Williams is most fully informed and where his argument is most valuable. He discusses the evil effects of excessive censorship at Conferences during the war, and explains the advantages of full publicity at San Francisco. He was himself in charge of British publicity there, and those of us who saw him at work will endorse his view that an admirably successful technique was evolved. It is amongst the merits of this book that Mr. Williams gives us excellent thumb-nail sketches of prominent people with whom he has worked and spices his argument with anecdotes. Amongst the best is his account of Mr. Ernest Bevin. On one occasion he told Mr. Bevin that he ought to become Foreign Secretary, and he prophesied that as Foreign Secretary Mr. Bevin would make those changes in the personnel of the Foreign Office and, above all, in our overseas representation, which would enable the new Social Democratic England to give a true picture of itself to foreign countries. Here prophecy has not been fulfilled.

The Labour Government, which is now carrying through a great programme of social reform at home, and which is trying too tentatively to introduce the same spirit into its relations with foreign Powers and colonial peoples, has not yet found instruments of Social Democracy in its representations with other Powers. We are represented abroad in many countries by those who believe that this is still the England of Baldwin and Chamberlain. It would be a mistake to imagine that such men often and deliberately sabotage policies laid down by the Cabinet; the truth is that their training, their habits of mind and, above all, their social contacts make them quite unfit to speak and act for the England of 1946.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

EYES AND NO EYES

The Approach to Painting. By THOMAS BODKIN. *Collins*. 8s. 6d.

"He has the great virtue in those who wish to persuade—tolerance"—such was the tribute justly paid by a critic to Mr. Bodkin upon the first appearance of this book twenty years ago. Ichabod, ichabod! No one to-day is likely to repeat this tribute, not even, I think, Mr. Bodkin himself, who obviously plumes himself on the rigour of his judgments. Indeed, one of the interesting features of the recent controversy about Matisse and Picasso was the violence of the language used by the Old Guard. Every year at the Royal Academy I see pictures that seem to me just as ugly, I suspect, as those by Matisse seem to Mr. Bodkin, but I cannot raise like him feelings of tempestuous indignation. Is this because I care less for painting? I think not. It is rather that most of the pictures I dislike are not taken seriously by anyone except the Town Councillors who buy them for our provincial museums, while the pictures Mr. Bodkin dislikes are eagerly sought for by museums and collectors all over the world. This does not prove that Matisse is a good painter; but it does mean that he cannot be dismissed, like Sir Frank Dicksee, with a shrug of tolerant amusement.

The reprinted parts of Mr. Bodkin's book are stimulating and enthusiastic. He discusses five ways of approaching painting, all of them recommendable; and he discusses in some detail twenty-three masterpieces of the past. In this new edition he has left in a certain number of paradoxes that his mature knowledge might have induced him to suppress. We are still told, for instance, that Venice has the same climate as Florence, and that the sumptuous entertainment depicted in Tintoretto's *Marriage Feast at Cana* is "a simple village gathering." But such lapses are few, and I would recommend the book wholeheartedly but for a section that has been added, "The Approach to Modernity."

I knew that Mr. Bodkin disliked many pictures I admire, but I was not prepared for the wildness of some of his remarks. He opens by deploring "the widespread delusion that a great and beneficent cleavage, a complete rupture with outworn tradition, occurred in pictorial art about the time of Cézanne's death and as a result of his example." What good does Mr. Bodkin hope to obtain by attributing the youthful extravagances of a few almost forgotten "Dadaists" and "Futurists" to the general body of those who admire contemporary painting? Roger Fry and Clive Bell, for instance, never ceased emphasising the importance of tradition—indeed the reason why Fry preferred the Post-Impressionists to the Impressionists was because he thought they had returned to the tradition of the Old Masters. And to-day all of us, from Sir Kenneth Clark downwards, who are active champions or collectors of contemporary painting, care passionately for the art of the past. Among whom, then, has Mr. Bodkin discovered this "widespread delusion"?

Anger seems to prevent Mr. Bodkin, and many who share his distastes, not merely from understanding the artist's purpose but even from scrutinising the paintings they attack. Mr. Epstein, for instance, dismissed the Paul Klees at the National Gallery as "doodles." Now perhaps the most conspicuous quality of these Klees is the extraordinary elaboration of their technique. Some of the effects in texture can have been obtained only by prodigious patience, by wetting the paper, and drying it, and rewetting it, and, for all I know, by putting it alternately in the oven and in the refrigerator! A comprehensible complaint would be that Klee was too much interested in technical processes, in what painters call "cuisine"; that his work was finical and too carefully calculated. But "doodles"! A doodle surely is a drawing made automatically, thoughtlessly, hastily, a drawing in fact that has something in common with Mr. Epstein's more slapdash watercolours. This habit of offering the most unplausible explanations for one's dislikes must result, I think, from violence of emotion. In just the same way Mr. Bodkin follows an onslaught upon Graham Sutherland with the generalisation: "Technical skill" is replaced by casual, crude handling." I well understand why some good judges of painting dislike Mr. Sutherland's work. But he resembles Klee in the evident care he gives to the texture of his pictures, which frequently rival butterflies' wings in the delicacy of their mottlings. I should have supposed that only an ignoramus (and Mr. Bodkin is anything but that) could find his handling "casual" or "crude." The only explanation I can think of is that faced with works he dislikes, Mr. Bodkin has no longer the patience to use his eyes.

The one thing certain is that indignation has

en him into the most astonishing mis-ements. In 1910, he tells us:

Roger Fry became interested in the fortunes the Grafton Galleries then drifting towards solvency. Endeavouring to retrieve that situa-n, he determined to organise an exhibition there French Paintings exemplifying the latest tend-cies. On his way back from Paris with a truck-ad of exhibits, he spoke with mingled amusement d apprehension to a friend whom he met on the ain at Folkestone. He had, apparently, no ulted notions about the artistic merits of the pro-cted show.

would seem odd if Mr. Bodkin had never wn Roger Fry. It would seem odder if, ing known him, he could believe that Fry's iration for the Post-Impressionists had been ded on a desire to rescue the Grafton Gal-s from insolvency. Mr. Bodkin had only ead Virginia Woolf's Life of Fry in order discover with what characteristic and almost ic enthusiasm he regarded the exhibits was launching on London. Not one penny the profits made by the Post-Impressionist ibition went into his pocket. They were ded between Mr. Desmond MacCarthy (the etary of the show) and the proprietors of Grosvenor Galleries, in which Fry had no ncial interest whatsoever. Those who mniate the dead expose themselves to no l penalty, but is it not rather credulous of Mr. kin to accept lightheartedly stories that are so improbable and so easily disproved?

Mr. Bodkin's book was originally written to the public to enjoy pictures, and the strangest g about the new section is that it is meant to e the reader not "approach" contemporary ures but recoil from them. Knowing that his es in contemporary painting were different n mine, and finding a section entitled "The roach to Modernity," I expected him to me up to his favourites in the same persuasive in which he had led me up to old pictures. haps if somebody well educated and highly culate like Mr. Bodkin would explain to me esoteric qualities to be looked for in the ks of Sir Alfred Munnings, Mr. Burra or ne Laura Knight, I might become able to y some subtle nuances I have hitherto missed. if Mr. Bodkin likes the work of these painters, does not say so. Indeed, his book does not ain one word of praise for any picture by a ng man. Does he then think that no con-porary painting is worth approaching? If ed this is his belief, I wish he had admitted it and enlarged upon his reasons. Such a point of view would be interesting to hear discussed, if only for its singularity. On the other hand, should there be painters alive who excite his enthusiasm, his silence is unkind both to them and to us.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

COAL-FACE

Miners' Day. By B. L. COOMBES. *Penguin Special.* 1s.

Perhaps not many of those who are partial to practical facts view clearly or with much concern the activities of miners. Dust is traditionally associated with nothing but dust; filth and misery with misery and filth. What is there interesting about pit-work, anyway? "Coal," says B. L. Coombes in this splendid book, "is a hard mineral, and there are things that go with its winning which are as black and as hard as the coal." Yet although his subject is so ghastly and interminable in experience, Bert Coombes does not deform, castrate, nor exaggerate it when he makes of it so absorbing a study.

It is a description of the people and the conditions which beset them in life, work, and in death at Resolven, Glamorganshire. At times the mountain is alive with creaking of roof, and crashing fall crushing asunder stout posts like splitting firewood; then the dripping of small stones heralding more falls. Meet poor Dan, sinking beneath his chestful of dust; Benjy, the sparrow-like rubbish man, inaccurate as he is keen on all he hears and reads. Then the begrudging overmen, the compensation quibblers; the Union men, the overworked doctors who must never be ill themselves; the crawlers and the sloggers and blacklegs.

Coombes' language takes one right through the dust and gas, into the danger and discomfort of this unnatural business: he is not merely steeped in the lore and craft of the industry, but his words feel out that particular of which he at that moment treats. These are the apprehensions and observations of an observant and reflective man. Yet he is digressive and lacks that insufferable emphasis which, in my experience, the typical Durham master wields. And he is forever starting afresh on each several grievance which is the miner's heritage, and passing on without brandishing any master-key. The question which engulfs all is the gaping incompatibility of human poverty and mineral wealth, tragedy amid aloof officialdom, ugliness amid the ruins and makings of beauty. And there is a gentle irony in his sense of comparison, but fairness swamps all and there is no outburst, no culminating indictment.

There is a discussion on keen gardeners and those who would offer a political cure for bad weather, for all the time Coombes favours a widening of aspect and diversions. And he feels that a wise control of resources would alleviate the crabbed and grisly fate of these valleys.

There are some very well-suited, greyish illustrations. Also some good moments of humour. On Wednesday many miners of agricultural extraction don leggings and proceed with sticks to Neath market, where they sagaciously prod cows they can never buy. Imagine Bert's amusement as he sees "a picture of Mr. Robert Foot, the new Chairman of the Mining Association, going into a mine. It seemed that was the first time he had that pleasant experience, and the paper printed it as an added qualification. He was talking to a mine boy, and this lad informed him that he hoped to become a colliery manager. . . . With the evidence right before his eyes he should have known that the way to get a really worth-while post in the mining world is to get the job first and go underground afterwards."

Then the usual jokes about us Bevin Boys. Then the procession of all the Churches together on Whit Monday. Then: "In the stalls, or working places of the colliers, I notice how each absent man has left his smell behind him. The one who ate onions with his snap of food, the other who washes with scented soap, the brilliantine which slicked another's hair, the plug tobacco which another chewed to his content, the minty smell of another's chewing-gum, they have all left their scent to remind us while above them all is the smell of human sweat mixed with coal-dust."

WILLIAM GARNETT

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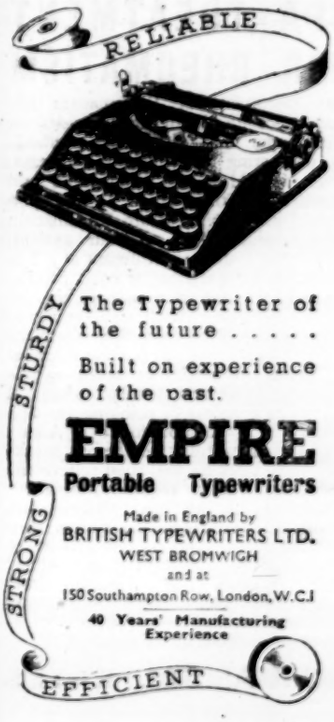

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toils over the difficulties of Anna's elusive letter, there flow these calming words: "Now, patience; and remember patience is the great thing, and above all things else we must avoid anything like being or becoming out of patience. A good plan used by worried business folk . . . is to think of all the sinking fund of patience possessed in their conjoint names by both brothers Bruce . . ." They are words I have often used to prop, in these bad days, my mind, as in my turn I have toiled through the pages of recent fiction. Patience is needed with all of the books listed above, even with Miss Mitford's *The Pursuit of Love*, which is rewardingly funny in many places. This is the least, and indeed the most, one can say of it. It begins extremely well with a picture of the children of an aristocratic family called Radlett. Its early pages introduce, in Uncle Matthew and Captain Warbeck, two of the best comic figures in any modern novel. I cannot recall a funnier picture of the violent foreigner-hating patriarch than Uncle Matthew; his early morning foibles are beautifully recorded:

> He raged round the house, clanking cups of tea, shouting at his dogs, roaring at the housemaids, cracking the stock whips which he had brought back from Canada on the lawn with a noise greater than gun-fire, and all to the accompaniment of Galli Curci on his gramophone, an abnormally loud one with an enormous horn, through which would be shrieked "Una voce poco fa"—"The Mad Song" from *Lucia*—"Lo, here the gen-tel lar-ha-hark"—and so on, played at top speed, thus rendering them even higher and more screeching than they ought to be
>
> . . . the spell was broken when he went all the way to Liverpool to hear Galli Curci in person. The disillusionment caused by her appearance was so great that the records remained ever after silent, and were replaced by the deepest bass voices that money could buy

But, alas, though Uncle Matthew dodges in and out of the whole book, the later pages are given over to the affairs of one of his daughters, Linda. It is to her that the title refers. The less successful episodes in her pursuit—her marriages with the banker Kroesig, and with Talbot, the middle-class Communist (a brilliant sketch)—are convincing enough; but at a moment of despair she is picked up by a French duke and installed as his mistress, and thenceforward the novel has the sentimental staginess of the late W. J. Locke. It has a certain characteristic contemporary wistfulness in its English admiration for the high-handed way in which upper-class French Catholics are presumed to fornicate, and one is interested to learn that the French are surprised if a woman does not express *honte* after a night with a lover. But it has also a dreadfully soft centre, and one is not surprised that Fabrice should eventually discover that what he feels for his enslaved mistress is the real right thing. They have both become unbelievable by the time Miss Mitford finally polishes them off; and in the later pages the irruptions of Uncle Matthew preparing to hold his house against the German invasion are a great relief:

> "I reckon," Uncle Matthew would say proudly, "that we shall be able to stop them for two hours—possibly three—before we are all killed. Not bad for such a little place."

Of Many Men and *The Crater's Edge* each exemplify an extreme of mannerism which we may expect in war-fiction for many years to come. *Of Many Men* is the extremely hard-boiled type of war-novel, *The Crater's Edge* the extremely soft-boiled type. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the prose style of the two writers; in offering for the reader's judgment a little example of each, I am reminded of yet another of Joyce's persuasive remarks: "When a part so ptee does duty for the holos we soon grow to use of an allforabit." Here, for instance, is a characteristic narrative passage from Mr. Aldridge:

> Wolfe entered Damascus with the French. The day after they arrived the Germans invaded Russia. Wolfe got the first Nairn bus that went to Baghdad and then he flew over the dead mountains to Teheran.
>
> The Russians in Teheran said they were sorry that Wolfe had been in Finland, very sorry; but if he waited maybe he would get a visa. He waited a long time and the Red Army was still retreating to the Dnieper when he left Teheran. He could not get a visa.
>
> The Germans were also in the Western Desert now. They had pushed the British back into Egypt and had encircled and isolated the Australians at Tobruk. Wolfe went into Tobruk on one of the relief boats.

And here we have Mr. Bagnall:

> If a girl loves someone at the age of sixteen for whom she has protested the madness of her love as a child of eight, even then he cannot be sure of her constancy, because, since nothing came of that protestation, nothing has flowered, and therefore nothing has had any opportunity to either flourish or die. Rather it has been in a state of perennial bud. So at first he made a noble decision of renunciation. Or perhaps it was not so much a decision he made as an attitude that he struck. Because he knew all the time he would not remain faithful to it. Yet he held it long enough to crystallise, or perhaps embalm, it in a sonnet of great-hearted finality and generous resolve.

Generous himself at this point, Mr. Bagnall spares us the sonnet; but he spares us little else. His theme is one of those old, well-tried ones which were never any good even when new: the theme of the dying man reliving the past. Not even vivid interludes can remove the distrust one has for a story whose end is also its beginning, and Mr. Bagnall's story has no vivid interludes. It is merely a series of lush reminiscences about the hero's four loves: his love for a ballet dancer (platonic), for a schooldays' friend ("without lust"), for a girl called Celia (with), and for the youthful Elizabeth (the real right thing once more). With its juicy, self-admiring prose, its purple passages, its recklessly misrelated participles and its lengthy commonplaces about the major problems of life, it is not an easy book to read.

The point of Mr. Aldridge's book lies in the quotation which prefaces it: "War is the shadow of many men, those in the sun and those in the shade; many hands clear the shade, but in truth they have only succeeded when the last shadow is gone." The book begins with its hero, Wolfe, emerging from the Civil War in Spain; during the next few years, in an unspecified capacity, he tours the second world war in Finland, Norway, Syria, Africa, Malaya, the Pacific, Italy and Germany; the facility with which he gets about will be seen in the passage I have quoted. After V-E Day he announces his intention of returning to Spain, and the point of the book is made clear. Presumably if Mr. Aldridge had waited a month or two longer, we could have accompanied his hero to the bombing of Hiroshima (doubtless inside the actual aircraft) and to the meetings of Hirohito and MacArthur. The pity is that even when we have had the overwhelming courtesy to accept Mr. Aldridge's style as a means of communication, he appears to have nothing to communicate beyond his central statement; the scenes we visit as we fly from one battle-front to another are stupefyingly machine-made. And though none will doubt the truth of his epigraph, and few will doubt its application to Spain, it is a pretty bald gag to write a book about.

HENRY REED

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Week-end Competitions

No. 836

by V. S. Pritchett

A revival of belief in the Devil, or Pure Evil, is becoming evident in religious and moral controversy. The usual prizes are offered for a polemical limerick on this subject. Entries by February 12th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 833

by Nicolas Bentley

Many universal benefactors remain anonymous during their lives and eventually die unsung. The usual prizes are offered for epitaphs, either in verse or prose, on any of the following: the inventors of the paper clip, the card index, the safety pin, the scissors, the water-closet, the umbrella, the windscreen wiper, the bicycle clip. Not more than eight lines.

Report by Nicolas Bentley

After hacking my way through a forest of entries, I emerge exhausted, but still smiling, to proclaim E. J. the winner of three guineas. A guinea each to H. P. B., Stanley J. Sharpless and W. Stewart. Competitors showed a great deal of wit but paid little respect to the customary forms and graces of the epitaph. (The water-closet, by the way, was far the liveliest source of inspiration. Why?) Apart from the winners, there is room to quote only a handful of those who deserve honourable mention.

The Water Closet

Here lyeth the bodye
of
Sir John Harrington, Knight,
Whose deare Renowne it was (boldlye presuming to
salute to Majestie the Necessities of oure weake
Sexe) he yet by soe great a Condescension not being
afraid downe) to contrive for a Queene such a THRONE
as noe other Monarque (noe, not King Solyman in
all his Glorie) did herctofore bestride.

L. E. J.

The Safety Pin

He for the animated bust,
The wayward haunch, devised control.
Unpinned at last, as mortals must,
He lies beneath. God rest his soul.

The Card Index

Flower of the bureaucratic mind;
ANON/INVENTOR, OB., P.A.
Be sure Saint Peter's staff will find
His card to hand on Judgement Day.

H. P. B.

The Scissors

Thou unknown severer of Gordian knots,
Through endless years thy requiem never fails:
The snip-snap of a million sempstresses,
And the paring of innumerable nails.

The Windscreen Wiper

Stranger, as you swiftly pass,
Spare a little charity
For him who helped us see through glass
With super-Pauline clarity.

The Bicycle Clip

With trouser legs discreetly furled,
Safe from contagion's scum,
He rode clean through a muddy world,
Clean through to Kingdom-Come.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

The Umbrella

With worne out Frame, in faded Trimm,
Tho' now furrl'd upp he lyes,
An earthen Cover shelters him
From Leakage of the Skyes.
Yet hark, ye Mourneres that pass by,
All sadd salt Teredrops lett,
Lest he that kept a whole World drie
Shou'd suffer from the Wett. W. STEWART

For the Unknown Inventor of the Water Closets at Mohenjo-Daro, in the Indus Valley (3,000 B.C.)

Dust unto Chalcolithic dust,
From ancient *ghats* your ashes spread,
As witnesses of moth and rust
Out of the kingdom of the dead;
Conveniences like our own
You made. And he who excavates
Knows not your race—but what is known
Mortality necessitates. REGINALD REYNOLDS

Lie lightly on him, earth, for he
Took many a heavy load from thee.

Lt.-Cmdr. (A.) GRAGGE

Windscreen Wiper

I now perceive, through Heav'n's transparency,
The Hand that wipes the tear from ev'ry eye.

GUY INNES

Sacred to the memory of Aloysius Snagg, who gave windscreen wipers to mankind.
Like so many children of his brain,
Eternally at rest. D. L. CHESTERTON

The Safety Pin

No longer need man's destiny (or woman's, either) hang on a single thread, for in this man's work lie the foundations of Social Security.

E. J. SEARS

This worthy Soul do not Lament,
He spared us all embarrassment;
Now, clad in his celestial gown,
He does not think of Coming Down.

H. MURRAY

The Umbrella Inventor

Happy, he joins th' angelic train,
To start the long ascension,
Seeking, since Heaven's the source of rain,
God's praise for his invention.

TOWANBUCKET

Scissors

Designer of the abhorred shears
Which sever all that nature tied,
Now rusted in this vale of tears
Yourself has crossed the great divide.

SIR ROBERT WITT

Here lies the founder of a dozen trades
Who first conjoined the separating blades.
Inventors seldom thrive. Fate, seeing, said
"The very thing!" and snipped his vital thread.

R. J. P. HEWISON

Paper-clip Inventor

Safe bind, safe find, your fond embrace
Collects our scattered leaves;
May the Almighty seek your aid
When garnering His sheaves.

SIR ROBERT WITT

Attached please find, O Lord,
Higgins of the Water Board.
His ingenious paper-clip
Enabled us our work to skip.
Now, with sense of honours due,
We pass our colleague, Lord, to You.

D. L. CHESTERTON

Inventor of the Card Index

From club to atom bomb, a vast array
Have helped dominion in some partial sway,
But by thy genius now the human race
From birth to death is docketed in place.
By thee is order kept and all controlled,
Eccentricks curbed and decent favours doled,
The prince and magistrate from power are hurled
The hand that keeps the index rules the world.

JOHN TOPLISS

Here am I filed for industry's rewards,
Indexed on stone who catalogued on cards.

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